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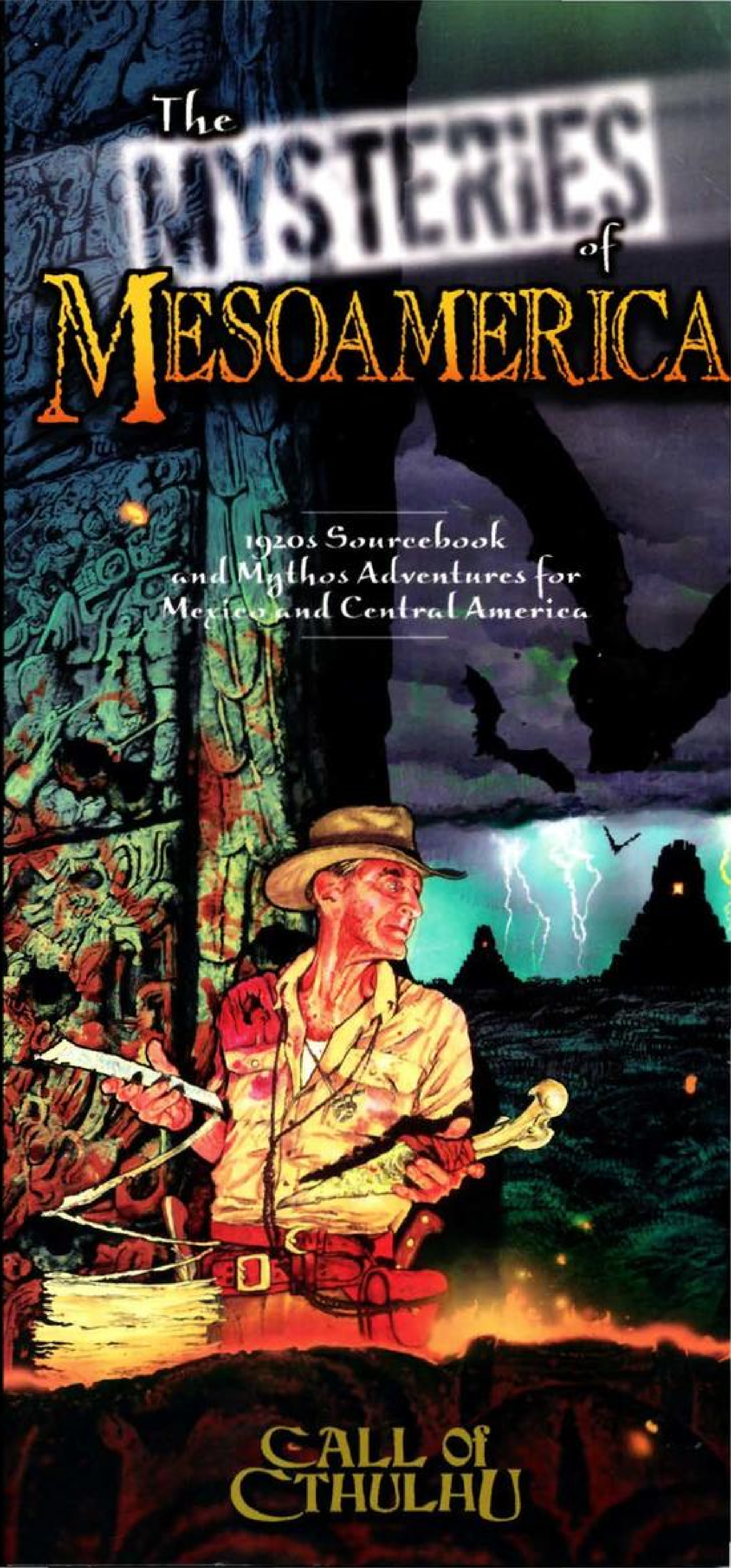

The MYSTERIES of MESOAMERICA

1920s Sourcebook
and Mythos Adventures for
Mexico and Central America

APPLETON
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CROWE
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CALL of CTHULHU

CLINT STAPLES

Pre-Columbian Cultures

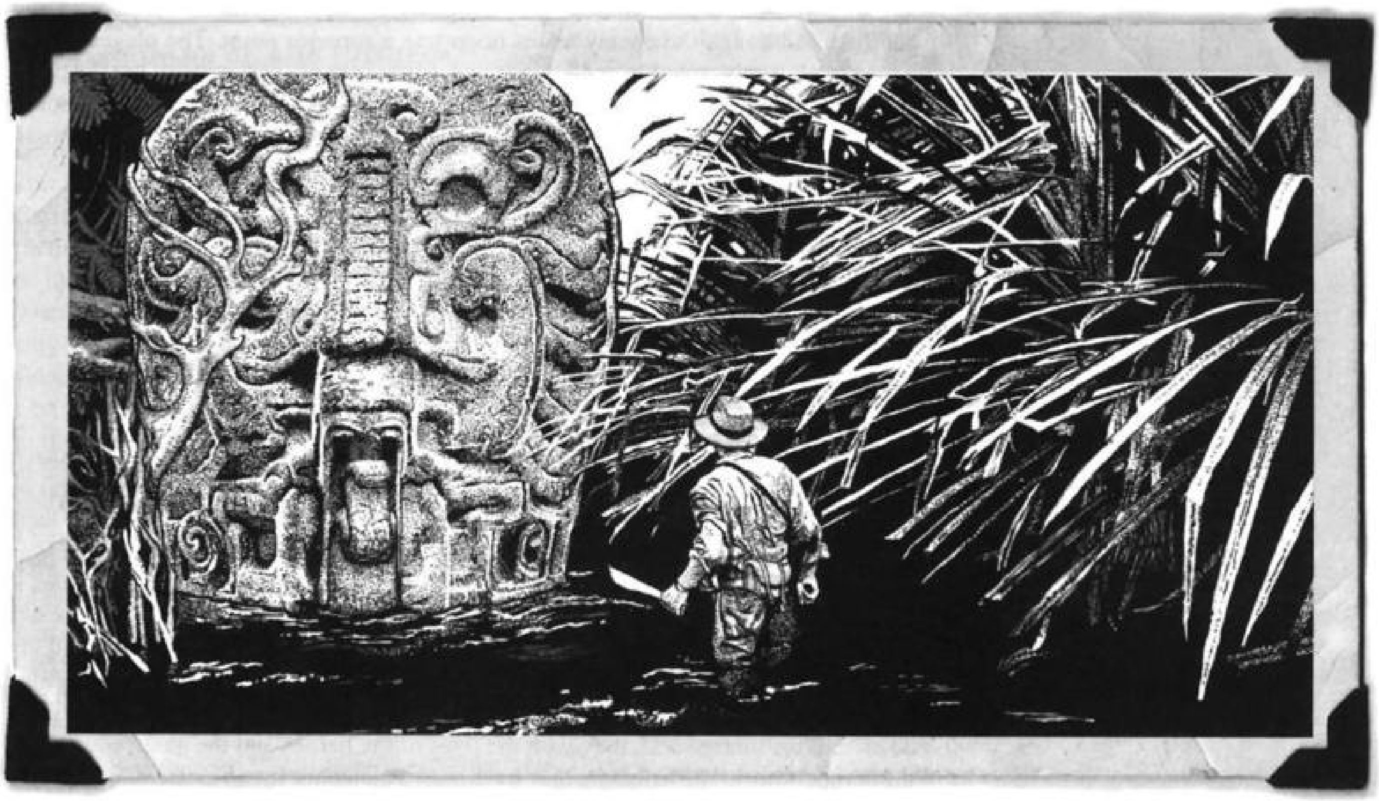
The Olmecs and their Mesoamerican Legacy

Just as the true names of so many of the cities of Mesoamerica will never be known, the name by which the Olmecs knew themselves is not recorded. Olmec was given to this first Mesoamerican culture by the Maya, it means "dwellers where the rubber grows." The primary source for knowledge of the Olmecs is archaeological investigation of their ruins. From such study, it is possible to see the many similarities between the Olmecs and their cultural offspring. Because their writing system is still indecipherable, any information the Olmecs themselves recorded is not available. The other source of information on the Olmecs is the legends preserved in the oral tradition of more recent Mesoamericans and whatever has been preserved in the codices of the Maya or the Aztecs.

It was only relatively recently that more than legends of the mysterious Olmecs were known. Up until the late nineteenth century, the veneration for the Olmecs shown by the chroniclers of Mesoamerica was the only evidence that the Olmecs had ever existed. In 1884, Alfredo Chavero found the remains of a culture distinct from any other known in Mesoamerica at that time. Along the coast of the

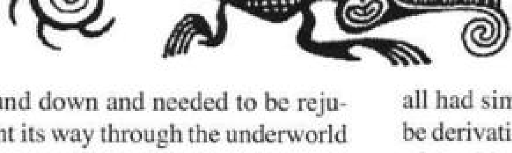
Gulf of Mexico several sites displaying these unique features were unearthed: great stone heads half a dozen feet or more in height, axe-heads with inscribed faces, statues depicting a creature that was half-human, half-snarling beast.

continue to exist and provide humans with a home. The food of the cosmos was human blood. Ritualistic, religious bloodletting and human sacrifice were important duties of humans to the gods. Blood gave the sun the strength to fight free of the underworld. Blood gave the bat-winged Mayan god Chac the energy to make the life-giving rain. Though the methods of sacrifice often varied, the practice and its purpose was consistent throughout Mesoamerica. Olmec burial and sacrificial sites have revealed mutilated skeletons, decapitated skulls, amputated limbs, and ritually murdered children.



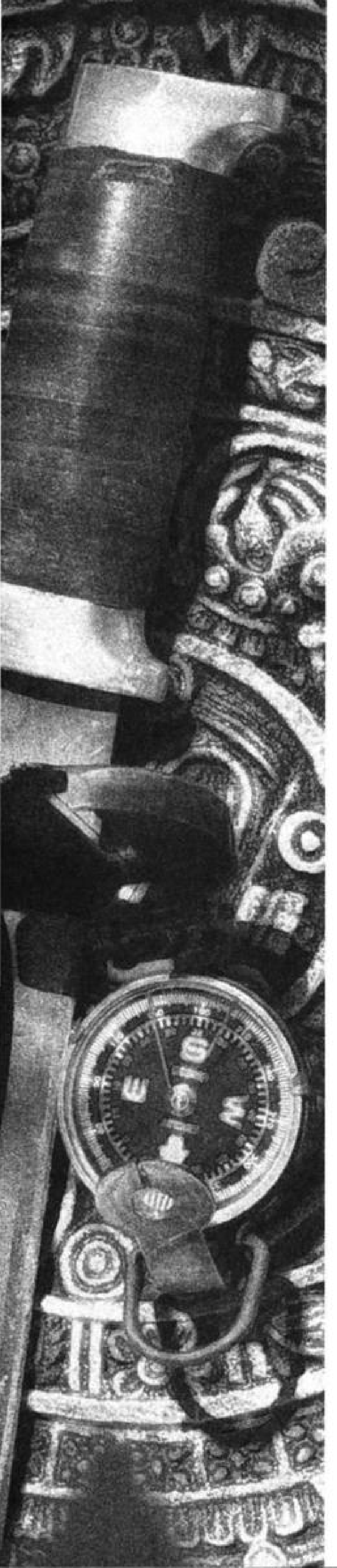
The Olmecs provided the general pattern of the cultural model used by every one of their successors in Central America and Mexico. Though there are certain aspects of culture that are specific to the Olmecs, there are also aspects that differentiate those peoples who followed from the Olmecs and each other. There are a number of things that all the descendant peoples shared. These appeared first among the Olmecs.

The Olmecs were the first Mesoamericans to have left behind information on their religion. The Olmecs believed in a heaven and an underworld, which were distinct from both each other and the land of humans, but which could at certain times and in certain places overlap. Further, the nature of these two realms is consistent with the way in which the Maya, Toltecs, and Aztecs viewed the cosmos. The cosmos was an inherently unstable place, like an immense machine that constantly wound down and needed to be rejuvenated. The sun must fight its way through the underworld each night, and each day it required food to sustain itself for further battle. All Mesoamerican cultures understood that human beings had a distinct role to play in the cosmic scheme. It was the place of human beings to feed the heavens, the sun, and the gods, in order that the universe would



The writing system which was first developed by the Olmecs was the model for all futures systems in the region. Pictographs are found in many Olmec sites, obviously similar to the later Maya signs. However, the Olmec "alphabet" has never been deciphered. Although the similarity cannot be denied, the Maya script is different enough from that of the Olmecs to make it impossible to use one to decipher the other. Yet many of the individual signs in Mayan are obviously derived from the Olmec script. At some point in the long Maya history, the writing system diverged enough from its progenitor that it became fully distinct. The Aztec, Mixtec, Zapotecs, and Toltecs all had similar pictographic writing systems. All appear to be derivative of, but also completely distinct from, the script of the Olmecs.

In a similar way, the Olmecs were the originators of the sacred ball-game of Mesoamerica. The earliest known ball-court is dated to the time of the Olmecs. It has the same characteristic I-shape of the courts of later cultures.



The rules of the Olmec game can only be guessed at, but they could well have been similar to the Mayan "Pok-a-Tok" or the Aztec "Tlachtli."

The game was played from the wide ends, terminal to terminal of the I, with the goal being to maneuver a hard rubber ball to the opposing team's terminal. Striking the terminal wall was a goal. Round stone hoops were suspended far up on the wall and to get the ball through the enemy teams hoop was a superior point. The players were allowed to play quite roughly and injuries and death were not uncommon; but the primary restriction was on how the player treated the ball, not on how he treated his opponents. The ball could only be maneuvered by contact with the players hips, knees and possibly elbows.

The food of the cosmos was human blood.

There was a distinctly sacred aspect to the ball-game in all Mesoamerican cultures. The losers of the games (some authorities have even suggested the winners) were at least occasionally sacrificed at the end of the game. The courts were invariably located near, and sometimes within the grounds of a temple complex. The *Popol Vuh*, the Mayan book of the creation of the universe, may give some idea of how the other cultures also viewed the ballgame (see *Popol Vuh*). A pair of heroic twins must play the Pok-a-Tok against the Lords of Death, the gods of the underworld. Through wiles and skill at the game, the heroes manage to outwit the Lords of Death. After several other adventures, the Heroes win their way back to the surface. Having cheated and destroyed the gods of death and the underworld, they won the lives of the heroes and the game equipment of the heroes' father. The ballgame may have been a metaphor for an existential mystery for the Mesoamerican, in much the same way that the passion play was for medieval Christians.

Later Mesoamerican cultures all contain the concept of a divine or semi-divine ruler. The King represents the Sun, his bloodletting, his pain, and his sacrifice are particularly sacred. While it is not possible to know that the Olmecs had such an office, they appear to have been a predominantly urban culture with sophisticated technology indicating task specialization. Magicians seem to have held a special place in society, and such individuals may have been elevated to kingship. The early Mayan cities are modeled after Olmec ones and even the Olmec artistic style was emulated. The concept of sacred kingship was probably inherited from the Olmecs as well. From the Maya, it may have spread to the Zapotecs, the Totonacs, and later the Toltecs. In all likelihood the Toltecs bequeathed this concept, and probably the rest of the Olmec cultural pattern, to the Aztecs.

The Olmecs Themselves

Beyond the cultural legacy that the Olmecs bequeathed to their descendants, little is known about them. From the special place of magicians in society, it is probable that magic, and especially divine magic, was considered the principle motivating force of the cosmos. Mages were given political power, gifts, slaves, feasts, possibly even had human sacrifice made in their honor. Temples were built to glorify, or perhaps to mollify, them. They became the priests and possibly rulers, the intermediaries between the gods and humans, between the world of men and the otherworld.

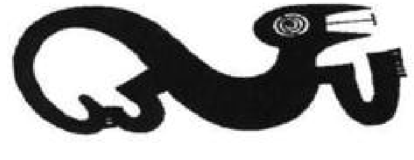
Olmec civilization seems to have been remarkably urban in nature, although it is difficult to be certain, since smaller settlements and farms would be nearly impossible to find in the swampy terrain of the Olmec heartland. The urban centers that have been found indicate a large body of lower class laborers, farmers, slaves, and servants supporting the upper classes. In ascending order of importance and descending order of size, these are artisans, warriors, nobles, priests, and the ruler and his household.

The Remains of the Olmecs

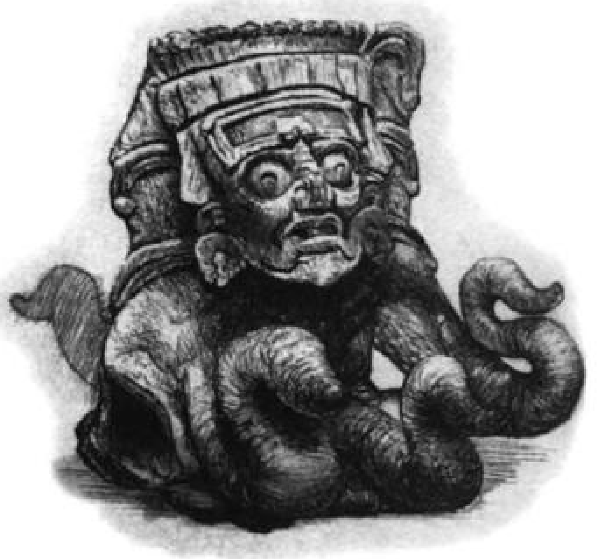
Because so much of what is known of the Olmecs is derived from study of their architecture and statuary, there are limits to what can be understood of their culture. The statues themselves are subject to a disturbing internal contradiction. Olmec artists were fascinated in roughly equal parts by the beautiful and the grotesque. Some statues portray near perfect examples of the human form that are technically and artistically equivalent to the work of the finest Hellenistic sculptors of Greece (such sophistication would not be reached in Greece until after the Olmecs had met their mysterious fate). Other artifacts are hideous half-human forms with cleft skulls, pointed heads, glandular and genital deformities, and squat obese bodies. They are strange and terrifying creatures, unpleasant mixtures of the human and the bestial. Others are bizarre polymorphic beasts displaying features from several creatures, some recognizable as parts of natural animals, others wholly the product of the aeons dead artisan's imagination. These pieces have been crafted with a skill equal to that which produced the beautiful human forms. But the subject matter is disturbingly suggestive of some sort of cultural schizophrenia. The fact that the number of grotesque pieces that have been found is far in excess of the number of pieces depicting objects of beauty is also unsettling.

A particularly common subject in the remaining Olmec carvings is that of a composite creature with the features of jaguar, caiman, eagle, and shark, sometimes grafted onto a humanoid body, otherwise fused together into something wholly monstrous. Carvings of snarling, mad-eyed, human-jaguar hybrids are also common. Three meter tall basalt monoliths carved into huge armored heads pose other problems. Firstly, the stones invariably are in sites where no such stone is quarried. The obelisks, each weighing as much as twenty tons had to have been quarried many miles distant and hauled or ferried to their present locations; an extremely daunting task in the swampy lowlands of the Gulf Coast, especially since beasts of burden were unknown and the wheel was impractical.

The faces carved on these stones are as enigmatic as their origins or means of transport. The heads display features that are not reminiscent of the facial features of the Mesoamerican population in later Classical times or in the modern era. In fact, the features have distinctly Negroid qualities. Certainly, they have features like no other statuary of the area.



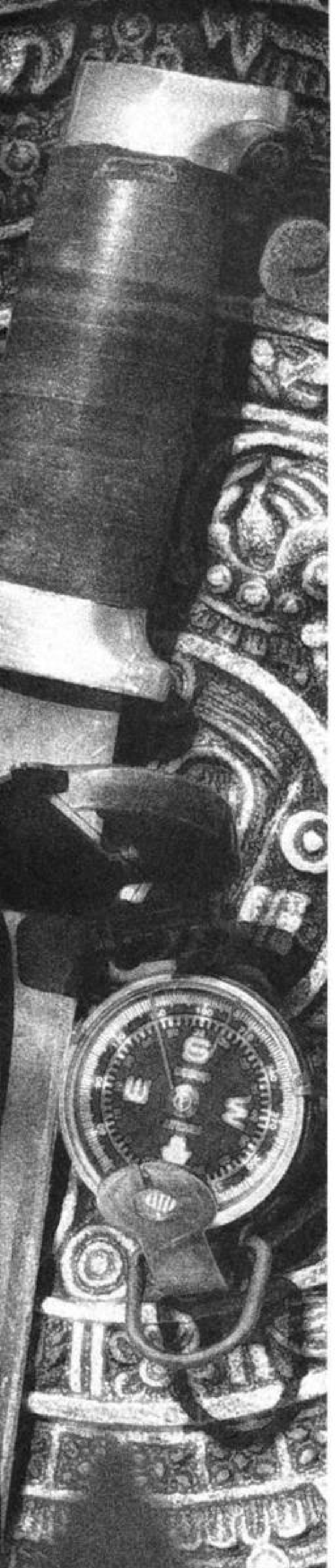
The Olmecs seem to have valued jade more than any other substance, and they passed this appreciation of jade to virtually every other culture that came after them. Extremely fine work in jade has been found in temples, tombs, and sacrificial sites. But there was no jade native to the heartland of the Olmecs. So traders had to venture north to Mexico and south into Honduras and beyond, even voyaging into the Pacific. They took aspects of the Olmec culture with them. Rubber-working, cotton-weaving, stonecutting, architecture, pottery, and sculpture were distributed alongside the Olmec merchants. That these skills were passed along to neighboring peoples suggests that the Olmec traders were more than simply occasional visitors. Rather they may have spent significant portions of each year in foreign settlements, travelling to it in the dry season, passing the rains away from their native land and returning when travel was once more practical.



San Lorenzo

The site now known as San Lorenzo was a ceremonial center to the Olmecs. Sitting on a partly natural, partly artificial plateau 165 feet above the forest floor, it commanded the surrounding area. It is now heavily forested, but was probably cleared when the site was in use. Nearly two hundred earthen mounds cluster on the broad flat top of the mound, arranged around a series of rectangular courtyards. It is thought that these courtyards, which vary considerably in size, might have formed the bases for houses or temples built of other materials which have been removed or have decayed into nothing.

A number of man-made pools are also arranged in apparent random fashion atop the plateau. Whether these were used for bathing, for ceremonial purposes, as wells, or for some combination of these is not known. As many as a thousand people may have lived on the plateau, and twice as many more could have inhabited the slopes or the area around the base. The higher strata of society probably held



the hilltop, while the humbler people clustered at its base.

About 900 B.C.E. San Lorenzo was destroyed, its statuary defaced or decapitated, its temples ruined, its monuments toppled. A handful of inhabitants remained, but they raised no new monuments or statues.

La Venta

A group of earthen mounds and enclosures built on an island in the swamps of northern Tabasco is all that remains of the capital of the Olmecs. After the fall of San Lorenzo, La Venta became the main political and religious center. The largest mound in La Venta is the Great Pyramid, one hundred feet high and 420 feet across the base. Lower mounds and courtyards are arrayed to its north. Burials with rich grave goods have been found in the area around the great Pyramid, but the Pyramid itself has not yet been explored.

Archaeological investigation at La Venta has shown that part of the religious life of the Olmecs involved ritual burial of offerings. Many such offerings have been found in the earth of La Venta such as mirrors of highly polished iron ore, axeheads, necklaces, and figurines made of jade, serpentine, or granite.

Nearly half a millennium after the fall of San Lorenzo, La Venta suffered the same fate, at equally mysterious hands.

The Fall of the Olmecs

Around 400 B.C.E., the Olmec civilization suffered a mysterious end. The cause is unknown. At this time, Olmec sites show deliberate signs of destruction, especially of sacred or ritually significant items. Temples were ruined, statuary defaced or decapitated, monuments toppled, glyphs hacked away, as though the agents of this destruction understood the power inherent in such items and knew that they could not hope to control that power. Who these agents were is impossible to discern. Whether the destruction was the result of the excesses of an outside invasion or the frantic death throes of a culture in decline is unknown.

Izapa

A unique cultural blend of Olmec and early Maya influences exists here on the border of modern-day countries of Mexico and Guatemala, near the Pacific coast. The period of habitation corresponds with very early Maya habitation elsewhere in Mesoamerica.

Ancient Visitors to Mesoamerica

Since the time of the Spanish conquest, it has been popular among non-natives to suppose that the natives of Mesoamerica could not have developed such high degrees of art, engineering and other "signs of civilization" on their own. Generations of European scholars have judged the natives too primitive ever to have originated these accomplishments. The most common theory advanced to explain the height of Mesoamerican culture is that of some ancient seafaring Old World culture was at the root of New World advances. In recent years, these theories have been dismissed by serious archaeologists and historians as prejudiced and wrong. Today only a few marginal "scholars" hold to this interpretation. In the period prior to World War Two, a respectable number of experts were willing to allow that it had some credence.

Aiding this line of reasoning are a number of factors which originate among the Mesoamerican cultures under review. The enigmatic figure of the Feathered Serpent (see the section so titled for further information) is regarded by nearly all the Mesoamerican (and a few South American) cultures as a pale-skinned, bearded seafarer who taught the tools of civilization to the natives. A number of statues or pottery figures seem to represent bearded men, often with facial features that do not conform to the Mesoamerican norm. These and other factors keep the theory of the advanced foreigner alive.

Below you will find a number of theories that have been put forward regarding influences on Mesoamerican culture. As a keeper, it will be up to you to decide whether, or if, any of these contain any truth. They are not necessarily mutually incompatible and more than one of them might be "true" in your world. But one factor should be born in mind when using this section - what do you want to accomplish with the decisions you are making about this material?

Perhaps you decide that ancient African sailors settled among the early Olmecs. By itself, that is hardly significant in a game, though it would be earthshattering in the real world if it were proved to be true. How, as a Keeper, can you make use of this fact? Perhaps the sailors were driven from their land for their worship of a dark leopard-headed god. They brought this worship to the Olmecs and the carved "were-jaguars" are representations of this god. If the investigators have previously come into contact with, or learned about the leopard-headed god, they suddenly have hints of a connection between the Old and New Worlds. It may be just the surface of a transatlantic cult or conspiracy which, of course, survives in some form to the present to confront the characters.

Or, the nineteenth century musings about the lost continents of Mu and Lemuria are not preposterous, merely slightly inaccurate. Submerged cities off the Gulf Coast of Mexico should conjure a few possibilities for the imaginative Keeper.

The most important thing is to create a framework for the ideas in this section (actually, this applies to the way you use the whole book). Decide what is true and what is not. Do not tell the characters what is true. Let them figure it out the hard way. Decide when the investigators will find whichever tidbit they discover. Maybe even tailor the information to the character who will discover it. This will help you remain consistent. The investigators will react more appropriately to what you are doing if you have a plan, even if they don't have any idea what it is you are planning. The plan can be loose enough to change when you need, but at least you will have some basis upon which to add the changes.

China and Mesoamerica

Gunnar Thompson claims that Chinese travellers came to Mesoamerica circa 500 B.C. to trade for jade, a rare and extremely prized commodity in Asia. He notes that the ancient peoples of both China and Mesoamerica held jade in high esteem and made great use of it in art as well as in religious ritual.

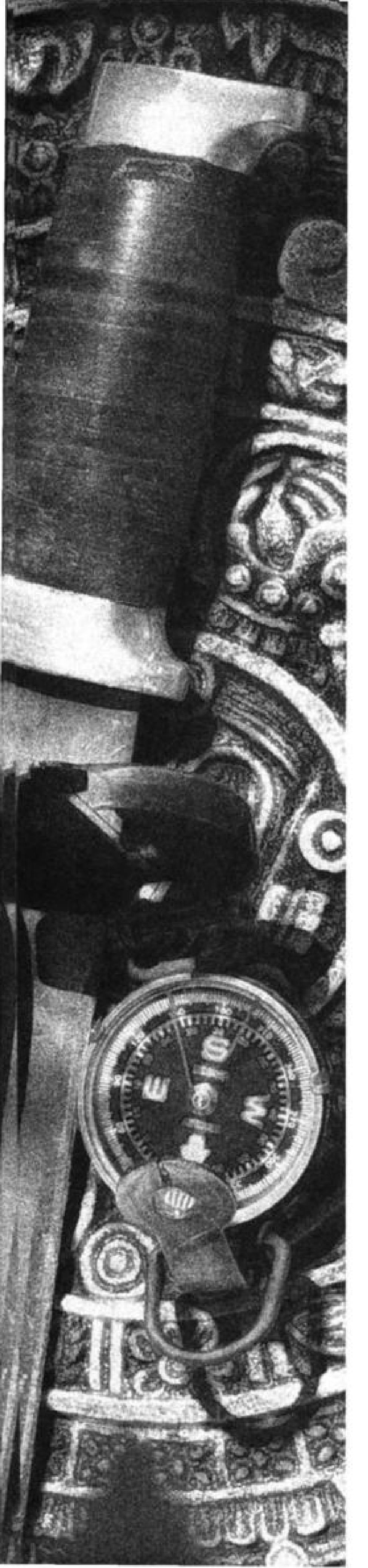
The Chinese viewed jade as the magical symbol of the sun and heaven, prized more highly than gold, and as the active principle, yang, of the yin yang cosmic duality. No natural deposits of jade are known in or near China. Thompson suggests that originally, jade was imported through the Amur valley of central Asia. But the route was fraught with danger and the way often threatened or closed

The Charts of Admiral Piri

A map was discovered in 1929 in Istanbul which has been attributed to the Ottoman Turkish admiral Piri who died in 1513. The map is remarkable for several reasons.

The Piri Map shows what are without a doubt the coastlines of South America and Antarctica. The details of the coastal markings are fine enough that there is little doubt of the identification of the places on the chart. Even at the latest date that Piri could have made the map, the accuracy is astounding. Only two decades after Columbus' discovery, South America remained almost unexplored and the few maps available were little more than guesswork. Antarctica was not even included on these early Spanish charts. If it was known, it was of no use to sailors due to the local conditions. But it is the details given of the shoreline of Antarctica that are truly remarkable. The Piri Map shows the coastline, not as it appears with the masses of permanent ice that cap the entire landmass, but the landmass itself. This coastline has, by scientific estimation, been buried under the ice since approximately 4000 B.C.E. Only with seismographic equipment in the last few decades has it become possible for the true features of the Antarctic shore to be charted.

If the Piri Map does indeed show an ice-free Antarctica, the history of cartography must be completely rewritten. It would mean that Admiral Piri was drawing on cartographic sources that record details from thousands of years prior to the earliest known maps and in detail which only appeared among the cartographers of the Renaissance.



by hostile barbarians or greedy intermediaries. In an effort to obtain a regular supply of jade under their own control, Chinese merchants journeyed far to the east and made contact with one or more civilizations in Mesoamerica.

The voyagers first found the cities of the Olmecs along the Pacific coast of Mexico, but found them more interested in sacrifices and cannibalism than in trade. Thus the Chinese continued southward and, adopting the Gulf of Fonseca as their base camp, formed a small trading colony. Far away from the warlike Olmecs, the outpost dominated the coastal trade routes between Mexico and Panama. Trade with the locals included such items as exotic feathers, psychedelic plants and mushrooms, gold, and jade.

Over time this temporary outpost became permanent and expanded its economic power through military means. Through interbreeding with the local population, the Chinese element was totally assimilated over the centuries, but this hybrid culture eventually reached its height as the civilization of the Maya. As proof of this, Thompson points to the many statues and ceramic figures at Copán and other Maya sites which, he claims, show decidedly un-Mayalike facial features.

The Eastern Origin of the Toltecs

It has been suggested that the Toltecs were invaders from the old world. After the destruction of Carthage in the middle of the third century B.C.E., a small armada of Phoenicians voyaged west through the Pillars of Hercules and after long travel and great hardship came upon the city that is now known as Chichén Itzá, colonized it, and expanded it to forge an empire.

There is a tradition in the Old World that the Phoenicians discovered a vast land of mountains and plains and navigable rivers many days sailing to the west of the Pillars of Hercules. The legend tells that one or more Phoenician craft near Libya, after having been driven west before a storm for many days, discovered this land unlike anything previously known.

In "Before Columbus," C.H. Gordon posits that the Phoenicians took over the Trans-Atlantic relations originally established by the Egyptians, who gave the art of engineering and pyramid-building to the peoples of Mesoamerica. He notes that the

Early Contact with Africa

There is some evidence to suggest that the Americas may have been visited in the distant past by travellers from the west coast of Africa. In 1944, in Acambaro, Mexico, over 33,000 objects of jade, stone, ceramic and obsidian were found. Some of these objects were statues - ranging from tiny votives to several feet in length and height. Of the statues, many portray what appear to be large lizards or reptiles with humans, engaged in what appear to be sexual acts, but also often the lizards appear to be eating the humans.

Many of the humans shown in these statues have atypical facial features when compared to Mayan, Aztec, and Toltec artifacts. Some are facially similar to the negroid-featured stone heads attributed to the Olmecs. Others appear to be bearded.

Carbon dating of the pottery at Acambaro has suggested a date between 2500 and 4000 B.C.E. Even if the younger date is accepted, this is centuries before the rise of the Olmecs.

One further curiosity exists at Acambaro. Clay vessels have been found contain teeth from what seems to be a species of horse thought to have died out in the Ice Age. Among the teeth have also been found human skulls.

According to S. Marble in "Before Columbus," Christopher Columbus brought back reports of ongoing trade relations between South Americans and Africans. He is supposed to have returned to the Old World with spearheads of a mysterious metal, called Quanin by the natives. On his second voyage, Columbus was convinced that he would find evidence of African influence in the New World. He believed he was on the trail of the kingdom of Prestor John, the supposed Christian monarch of a mythical kingdom beyond the bounds of known civilization.

great geographer of the late Roman Republic, Strabo, comments that the Greco-Roman world was far inferior to the older civilizations of the near East in regards to maritime navigation. Gordon points to the correspondence between several Aztec glyphs to signs found on the Pharos disk, a ceramic relic of ancient Knossos on the island of Crete, as further evidence of contact between the two worlds. He suggests that worship of the crocodile god was brought by the Egyptians to the New World. One name for the Egyptian god was "Sobek" or "Sebek." The Nahuatl name for their crocodile god was "Cipactli," pronounced something like "si-pact-lee." The -tli ending is a suffix common to many Nahuatl nouns, so the root would be very close to the Egyptian word.

But the contact between these worlds may go back even further than the second millennium B.C. Gordon points to the similarities in style and construction between the megalithic structures of Europe and North America as proof of a Trans-Atlantic culture from the third millennium B.C.E. or before. Megalithic sites, large standing stones or rings of stones such as Stonehenge and similar sites, are found all over northern Europe. They are also scattered over a large portion of North America, from Labrador in northeastern Canada to as far south as Tennessee and as far west as Colorado. Such a vast area does not necessarily mean that the megalith builders were a cohesive empire. but there may have been contact in the form of warfare and trade between some of the southern megalith builders and the proto-Olmecs. Perhaps there was contact between the megalith builders and the ancestors of the Maya or the Aztecs before these peoples migrated south.

The Children of Cain

Zecharia Sitchin argues that America is the "Lost Realm of Cain." The "Mark of Cain" is the lack of facial hair, and thus the Mesoamericans are Cain's descendants.

A curious manuscript written in Quiche Maya and dated to 1554 and translated by Padre Dromisio-Jose Chonay, claims that the three Quiche Maya nations are descendants of the ten lost tribes of Israel. The three Mayan authors attest to this by signing themselves as descendants of those who came from Givan-Tulan, near Babylonia.

Successors to the Olmecs

Teotihuacán

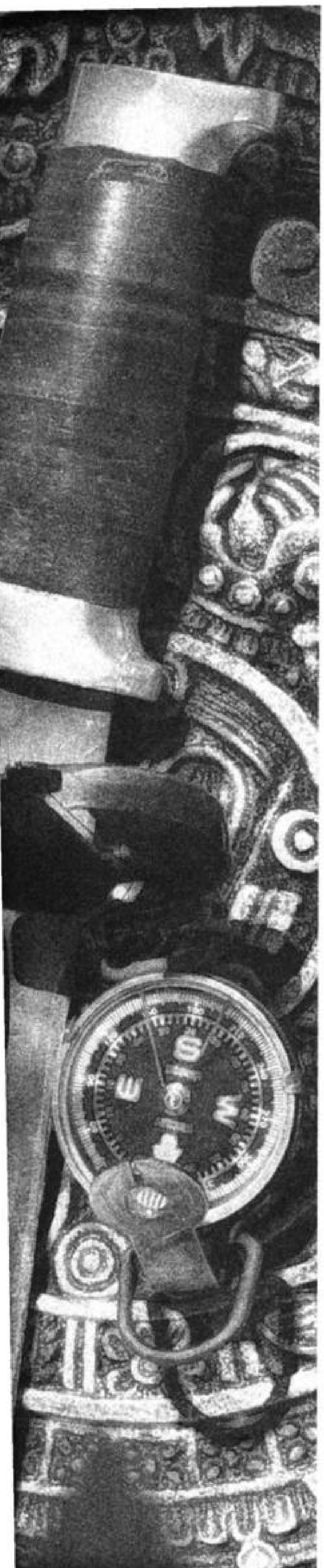
According to Aztec myth, Teotihuacán was built prior to a great cataclysm in which day turned to night and the sun did not rise. The men or gods who inhabited Teotihuacan had to save the sun, and the humblest of them all cast himself into the fire and became the new sun. But the other heavenly bodies could not yet move, so all the gods of Teotihuacán cast themselves into the fire to save the earth and mankind. Then the gods ruled in the city until they died, whereupon giants raised the pyramids of the sun and moon over their resting place.

Located thirty miles northeast of modern Mexico City, Teotihuacán is among the most enigmatic of all Mesoamerican sites. Though the ruined city remains, its builders and inhabitants are unknown. Eighty-five square miles of temples, palaces, courtyards, and houses, erected according to a rectangular grid, this was perhaps home to as many as 200,000 people at its height. Its influence and trade network at this time would have extended over the entirety of Mesoamerica. Yet little is known about the culture that lived here. It is known that the construction of the city was begun around 150 C.E. Sometime around 750, Teotihuacán suffered a major cataclysm of some sort, which resulted in the destruction of much of the city by fire. The cause, even the precise nature of the cataclysm, is not known, but the city did not recover.

What is known as the Avenue of the Dead runs north-south through the center of Teotihuacán. Lining this avenue are the ruins of over seventy-five temples. Gods that are recognizably similar to those depicted in later Aztec art are depicted in many of the temple blocks scattered in the once well-tended courtyards. Tlaloc, the rain god; Chalchihuitlicue, god of water; and Quetzalcóatl, the feathered serpent, are all found engraved upon the carved stones.

The greatest and most distinctive ancient structure of Teotihuacan was certainly the Temple of the Sun. Constructed over a great cavern that was itself probably sacred, the Temple of the Sun is a huge 200 foot tall pyramid. Hundreds of lesser temples, workshops, homes, and less readily understood structures were arrayed along gridlines around its base.

The city must have boasted highly skilled stonecutters and craftsmen, as well as workers of wood, pottery, jewelry, shell, and metal. Merchants are known to have traded with such distant regions as modern Texas and Arizona for turquoise, a substance not otherwise available to the Teotihuacános. Shell and copal incense were imported from coastal regions. Given the distances involved in such trade, it is possible that the merchants of Teotihuacán were seasonal inhabitants of other settlements many miles from



their homes. Such a practice was known to be used by traders among the Maya.

The fall of Teotihuacán around 750 is roughly concurrent with the decline of Zapotec culture, centered around Monte Alban. It may be that there is a common cause for the decline of both cities. Analysis of skeletal evidence in Teotihuacáno graves show that signs of disease are widespread among the people at this time. It is also possible that an outside aggressor is to be blamed. Murals in the city first depict battle scenes around 600. Perhaps the Teotihuacános succumbed to long term pressure from invaders. Whatever the cause of the collapse, the absence of the Teotihuacános opened the way for other, less advanced peoples to move in from the north. One of these was a tribe that lost virtually every battle into which it was forced. Eventually forced out of even the marginal farmland available in central Mexico, the tribe had no other choice than to build their own artificial island on Lake Texcoco. An ignominious beginning for the warlike, aggressive, and vastly successful Aztecs, who eventually conquered and annexed many of the tribes who had previously routed them.

Kaminaljuyu

This ancient city-state exhibits many architectural similarities to Teotihuacán, though on a scale less grand. Situated near a plentiful source of high-grade obsidian, this may explain the interest the Teotihuacanos had in what must have been, for them, a remote outpost. Tombs in Kaminaljuyú contain many relics and trade goods from its parent city.

Cerro de las Mesas

The greatest period of culture for this site occurred alongside the early Maya. But the greatest influences on Cerro de las Mesas are the Olmecs and the Teotihuacános. Artifacts include stele with the "were-jaguar" figure so prevalent in Olmec art. Also found here is a large and imposing statue of a duck-billed man.

The Zapotecs

The Zapotecs migrated into the northeastern portion of the Valley of Oaxaca from the north around the beginning of the first century B.C.E. They later expanded into the southeast and eventually controlled the valley as far as the sea.

The center of the Zapotecs was at Monte Alban in the Oaxaca Valley. From there they ruled the irrigated and terraced fields of the surrounding villages. By 150 C.E. the population of the city and its surrounding supporting villages may have been as high as 24,000. In Monte Alban itself the upper classes lived in grand stone buildings similar in style to the temples that stood at the highest point of the city. Humbler huts of sticks and grass sheltered the poorer inhabitants.

Beneath the surface of Monte Alban, a complex series of claustrophobic tunnels have been discovered. Barely two feet square, the tunnels are difficult to maneuver through and have in places collapsed. In 1933, several explorers crawled on their backs over two hundred feet down one such passage until they reached the point where it had collapsed in the past. Just before the collapse they found a skeleton and several artifacts of jade, turquoise, and pearls. Extricating themselves from the dead end tunnel, the explorers dug from the surface to a point beyond the blockage. Here they found that the main passage had several smaller branches only a foot across off of the main tunnel. At a distance of three hundred and twenty feet from their original entry point another skeleton was found. A dozen feet beyond the tunnel ended abruptly.

Two other miniature tunnels were later found, packed with clay, beneath the structures of Monte Alban. Another complex tunnel system, not clay packed, lies beneath the richest burial on the site. The purpose of the tunnels is unknown.

Around 700 C.E. the Zapotec civilization suffered a major blow. There is no overt sign of this disappearance as there was in the case of the Olmecs. Monte Alban does not display the same signs of destruction, it merely ceased to be inhabited. Some Zapotecs are known to have survived their capital's dissolution. The city of Mitla became the capital when the survivors left Monte Alban. Mitla was built on a mountain ridge near the site of the modern city of Oaxaca, around the beginning of the Common Era. Mayan influence can be seen as well as that of the enigmatic inhabitants of Teotihuacán. It was a comparatively small center until the fall of Monte Alban. With the influx of survivors from the capital, Mitla grew to be the the greatest city of the Zapotecs, second only in might and sophistication to the fallen Monte Alban.

In the fifteenth century the surviving Zapotecs of Mitla, Xoca, and Cuilapan, came under the rule of the Mixtecs, an aggressive warrior people, who merged their own more primitive culture with that of the more advanced Zapotecs. The Mixtecs eventually were forced to acknowledge the might of the Aztecs but were never firmly under their power and required constant suppression.

In the seventeenth century, a Spanish priest named Burgoa visited Mitla. Upon his return he claimed that human sacrifice was still being conducted on a grand scale. Hundreds were supposed to have been slain, their hearts torn out. He also reported that beneath the streets of Mitla is an ancient city of the dead kings, nobles, and warriors of the Mixtecs. In Nahuatl, the tongue of the Aztecs, Mitla means "the place of the dead." Mixtec burials here have yielded over five hundred objects of gold, silver, jade, turquoise, pearl, onyx, marble, and amber.

According to Burgoa, in his day the passages to the paths of the dead were found and traced by several Spanish priests. They were so horrified by what they witnessed that they left and sealed the passages as an abomination. After Burgoa's time, the location of Mitla was lost and remained a mystery until the end of the nineteenth century. It was only discovered by explorers in 1895, and remained unexcavated until 1931, when Mexican archaeologist Alfonso Casa conducted several digs in the city.

Not far from Mitla, on the way to Oaxaca, stands El Tule, an huge and ancient tree, over one hundred feet in height and over twenty feet thick at the base. It is associated with the god Quetzalcóatl in local folklore.

The Totonacs

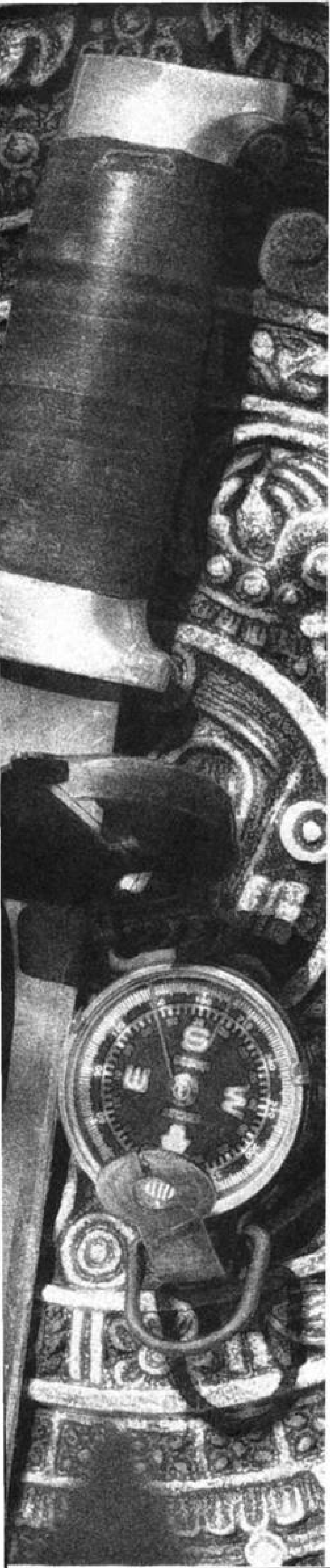
Like the Zapotecs, the Totonacs were contemporary with the better known Maya. The site now known as Cempoella was a late Totonac city destroyed by the Spanish conquistadors. Centuries earlier, the Totonacs were centered at El Tajin ("the Lightning"), which, at its height, was one of the largest cities of Mesoamerica. The existence of El Tajin had been known to scholars and archaeologists from legend as early as 1785, but it was not discovered until 1935.

Not far from modern Vera Cruz, amid the rampant creepers, thickets, and vines of the highland jungle, a steep hillock rose from the greenery. This mound of vegetation concealed the central pyramid of lost El Tajin. One hundred and fifty feet high and eighty feet on a side, with seven steps, it was distinct in style from any other pyramid then known. Spaced regularly along the exterior walls of this pyramid are 365 small square niches that seem to interrupt the stonework and ornamentation. Their original function is not known, although their size has led some to the conclusion that they might have housed offerings, possibly skulls. The fact that the niches seem to interrupt the ornamentation of the pyramid also suggests that there might once have been something placed within these empty spaces. The style of the ornamentation and the unique nature of the niche-pyramid have caused others to compare the pyramid and the other stone structures subsequently found on the site to the temples of Burma, thousands of miles across the Pacific Ocean. El Tajin was destroyed by fire, possibly at the hands of Chicimec invaders from the north.

At the time of Cortés advance on Tenochtitlan, the Totonacs inhabited the city of Cholula. It is told that, as the Spanish approached Cholula, the inhabitants were in the midst of sacrificing a large number of captives. The scene of this mass carnage so enraged the worldly and jaded conquistador that he had his force immediately attack the city, defeating its people and destroying its altars and idols. The Totonacs were the first of the Mesoamericans compelled to accept Christianity. The center of Cholula is the site of what was once a huge pyramid, 181 feet tall and 350 feet from side to side. One of the earliest Catholic churches in Latin America was erected at its apex. However, beneath the church and the temple that forms its foundation, there is a bewildering series of passages, a twisted maze of ornamented and mural-covered walls that honeycomb the earth under the temple. A small opening on the east side of the temple allows access to the tunnels.

The Toltecs

The origins of the Toltecs are shrouded in obscurity. Probably they a mixture of two distinct peoples. The first, known as the Tolteca Chichmeca, were barbarous



nomads from the deserts of northern Mexico. It is thought that, sometime before the tenth century of the Common Era, they may have moved south and encountered a people known as the Tolteca Nonoalca on their own migration from the south. Near the site of what became the Toltec capital, Tula, the Tolteca Chichmeca conquered the Nonoalca. According to Aztec records, which cannot be regarded as fully trustworthy, given the way in which the Toltecs were viewed by them, the remnants of these two peoples united under a king by the name of Mixcoatl and built the city of Tula.

The Toltecs retained their warlike ways after they inhabited Tula and the surrounding area. In 968, Mixcoatl was succeeded by his son, Topiltzin. Topiltzin, who later became synonymous in the Aztec mind with the god Quetzalcóatl, united a scattering of city-states surrounding Tula into a Toltec "Empire." Through conquest they spread their control over most of central Mexico during the eleventh and the first half of the twelfth centuries. Often they fought among themselves if an enemy did not present itself. This suggests a city-state sort of political system similar to that of the Maya.

Perched on a high ridge forty miles northwest of Mexico City, the ruins of Tula testify to the distinct nature of the people to whom it was home. The statuary, ornamentation, and buildings, though similar to those of other Mesoamerican sites, are unique to the Toltecs. The most impressive structure is the four-tiered pyramid temple. The route to the pyramid passes through a colonnaded hall, decorated with carvings of advancing warriors on the walls. Stone pillars carved in the likeness of the feathered serpent god border the entrance to the temple itself. Four thirteen foot tall basalt warriors originally supported the roof of the temple, but the roof is gone and the warriors now seem to implore the cosmos.

At the temple, as well as scattered throughout Tula, are large carved stone warriors, invariably in positions of repose, holding sacrificial bowls over their abdomens.

For the Aztecs, the Toltecs held a special place in legend. The Aztecs believed themselves the descendants of the Toltecs. When the Toltecs fled Tula, they built the city of Tenochtitlan, which became the capital of the Aztec Empire. The truth is far different, but the Toltecs certainly occupied a position of respect in Aztec legend.

Choice sacrificial victims were orphans, slaves, virgins, captured warriors, and criminals.

When the Aztecs came from the north to settle on the island in Lake Texcoco that would become Tenochtitlan, they came upon the ruins of a great city full of marvelously sophisticated carvings and temples. It had obviously been abandoned for centuries. The Aztecs gave the ruins of the civilization they found there the name "tolteca" which means "artist" or "builder" in Nahuatl. After a period of prosperity that lasted for centuries, the Toltecs were attacked from the north by repeated invasions of barbarians which steadily eroded the Toltecs' ability to defend themselves. Eventually the barbarians brought down Tula, only to be destroyed by later incursions of northern raiders. The last and most successful of these barbarians were the Aztecs, who adopted the mighty civilization they found at Tula as their heritage.

Yet there are as many unanswered questions in this explanation as there were in the legendary one noted above. Why did the Aztecs not settle in abandoned Tula, which was certainly a more promising site that the swampy island on Lake Texcoco? What legend prevented them from taking more than a fashioned ancestry from the dead city? Was the city still inhabited? Were there legends or other factors that kept the Aztecs at a respectful distance?

In 1168 C.E., Tula was attacked by barbarian marauders from the north. The temples and palaces of the city were looted, the monuments brought down, the populace enslaved. The survivors fled Tula and did not return when the invaders returned to their northern deserts. Tula was never reclaimed. The Toltecs were destroyed.

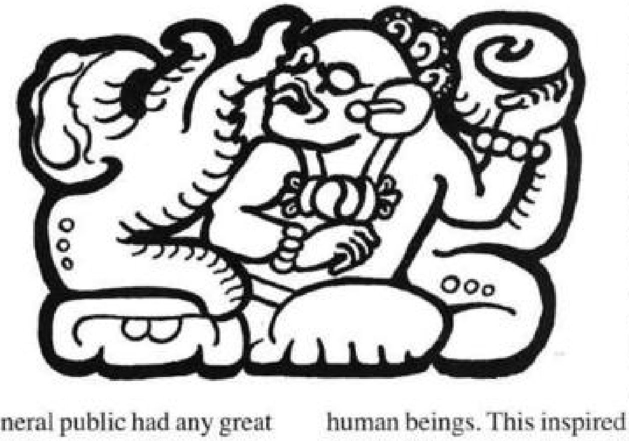
The City of Texcoco

On the east shores of Lake Texcoco, this city became the intellectual center of the Valley of Mexico under King Nezahualcoyotl - poet, philosopher, architect, and engineer of the Alcohua. His alliance with the Aztecs in the fifteenth century helped wrest power in the area from the Tepanecs and bring about the ascendancy of the Aztecs in their place. This king became a figure of legend among the Aztecs and is reputed to have had a hand in the design of Tenochtitlan. Texcoco is home to many temples, among them the mysterious Temple to the Unknown God.

The Civilization of the Maya

While the culture of the Maya, as well as those of the Aztecs and other Mesoamerican peoples was rich and viable, it is important to understand that the Spanish conquerors did not see it in this light. To the Christian invaders, the Mesoamericans were devil-worshippers who practiced abominable rites to further their demonically-inspired plans for the world. Even to so cruel and worldly a man as Cortés, the natives could only benefit from the destruction of their heathen culture. Armed with this conviction, generation after generation of Spaniards came to the New World intent upon instituting Spanish ideals and morals, saving the souls of the pagans and enriching themselves (not necessarily in that order).

This prejudice against the Mesoamericans, who had, it must be admitted, a culture extremely alien to that of their conquerors, was passed down for centuries and certainly was an opinion commonly held by Europeans, and Mesoamericans of European heritage, in the early decades of the twentieth century. Even among those who studied Mesoamerican civilization prior to the Second World War, the Mesoamericans of antiquity were viewed with a degree of horror. Only a minority of scholars and even fewer of the general public had any great degree of respect for the accomplishments of the Aztecs, the Maya, and their forebears.



In your campaign, it will be up to you how exactly the people of Mesoamerica will be viewed and portrayed. Certainly, any player who wished to have a character knowledgeable on the subject should be made aware of the opinion held by the majority of people at the time.

How We Know What We Know About the Maya

The main sources of information on the Maya are archaeological investigation and the writings of the Spanish conquistadores and their descendants. Only three Mayan "books," or codices, survived the Spanish conquest, so most of the information gathered about the Maya was second hand. Spanish sources typically portray the Maya (as well as most of the other Mesoamerican peoples) as barbaric, cruel, and satanically inspired. While they might grant that the Maya enjoyed significant technological and cultural sophistication, they could not ignore the ritual sacrifice of prisoners, the occasional offerings of children to the "gods," or the commonly seen self-mutilation and torture in the name of religious fervor.

In the early years of the twentieth century, archaeology was still in many ways a fledgling science. Often pursued by moneyed, leisured adventurers with little training, archaeology up to this time often simply consisted of tomb-robbing to fill the curio collections of European museums.

Those few archaeologists who actually took a scientific approach to their pursuits often labored under the most bizarre (at least by modern reckoning) theories and apprehensions concerning the subjects of their study. Often this was responsible for what are now regarded as preposterous misrepresentations of culture (see the Abbe Brasseur de Bourbourg). Sometimes it more subtly misguided the researcher or his readers (see the Comte de Waldeck).

The important thing for the Keeper to remember is that far less was known about the Maya then than now. Also, much of what was considered reliable then has since been refuted by more rigorous study. For example, only in the last few decades was it agreed among the scholarly community that the Maya practiced widescale human sacrifice. Until that time, despite considerable available evidence to the contrary, it was the general opinion that the Maya were unique in the Mesoamerican milieux in not practicing the ritual slaying of human beings. This inspired some modern writers to claim that the Maya were obviously artificially advanced through contact with alien space-farers.

The investigator, archaeologist, or adventurer of the early twentieth century would be surrounded by vague

and sinister theories, half-truths and lies about the ancient peoples of Mesoamerica. The Keeper must keep track of what information the investigators find, how they find it, and whether it is true or not. In general, try to make sure that the investigators never have all the information available on a given subject. See to it that they get the occasional disturbing (and true) tidbit to keep them off guard. Misleading sources and partial information will greatly increase the sense of suspense for the players. If you expect them to be frightened, don't lay out every piece of the puzzle. The unknown pieces of the puzzle are the bits that will intrigue them and, more importantly, that will bother them the most.

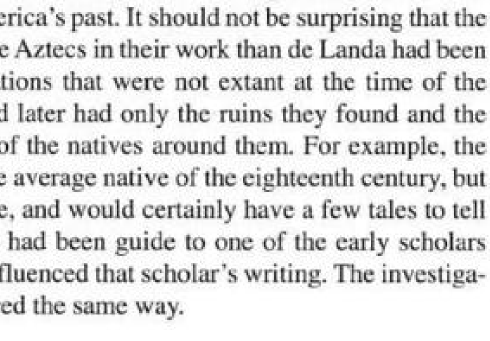
Another thing to remember is that the players are likely to know more about the subjects that their characters are pursuing than their characters do. Most of them will have at least some ideas about the Maya or Aztecs, from television or National Geographic if nothing else. Use this knowledge to your advantage. Allow some minor bit of information that the players might know to be true turn out false for their characters. This will cause them to question all of their knowledge, and put them in the dark - right alongside their characters.

For example: perhaps one of the players (or one of their characters) has read about the travels of Jean Frederick Maxmillian, Comte de Waldeck (if no one has, you could easily direct the players to his work, or let them see the biography in this book). Perhaps you can let the investigators find a memorial lamenting Waldeck's untimely death at the age of 82 while investigating the ruins of Palenque. In reality Waldeck lived a very active lifestyle until his death at 102 (it's all in the biography). Suddenly the players can no longer be sure of what they know or read, not to mention what their characters know or read. Add a few sinister details for them to find should they investigate further, and you have the beginning of a scenario.

If you are worried about changing history, don't be. This is a *Call of Cthulhu* campaign. History is a framework for your story. In our own non-game reality, degenerate cultists do not actually spawn age old conspiracies to bring about the return of the Old Ones. Nor does Cthulhu truly lie dreaming just off the coast. So you are obviously not following history in your Cthulhu game anyway. The key to rewriting our history for the enjoyment of your group is to be consistent and reasonably gentle with your changes. You want to unsettle and disturb, rather than create disbelief.

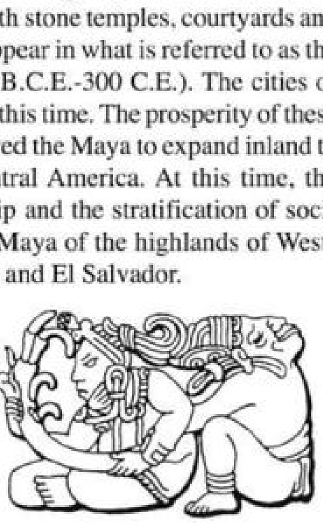
What has been said here about the sources of our knowledge of the Maya is no less true for the other ancient peoples of Mesoamerica. The basic tenets of Mesoamerican culture were sufficiently alien to Europeans that many of the same generalizations were made about all the cultures of Central America's past. It should not be surprising that the early Spanish writers were no kinder to the Aztecs in their work than de Landa had been to the Maya in his own. For the civilizations that were not extant at the time of the Conquest, the Europeans of that time and later had only the ruins they found and the vague and often conflicting information of the natives around them. For example, the Toltecs were little more than a name to the average native of the eighteenth century, but he might know where the local ruins were, and would certainly have a few tales to tell about their long expired engineers. If he had been guide to one of the early scholars exploring the region, his tales probably influenced that scholar's writing. The investigators could easily find themselves influenced the same way.

The Age of the Maya



The ancestors of the Maya may have been a group that migrated in the third millennium B.C.E. from the Pacific coast of what became the United States. Upon moving through Mexico, they established a stone age culture in the highly fertile gulf coastal plain of Mexico and northern Belize. The rich soil and the agricultural abundance it provided allowed this early culture to slowly sophisticate, probably under the influence of Olmec society and its descendants.

The Mayan population grew, and cities on the diversified Olmec model, with stone temples, courtyards and burial mounds, began to appear in what is referred to as the pre-Classical Period (900 B.C.E.-300 C.E.). The cities of Copán and Tikal date from this time. The prosperity of these and other early cities allowed the Maya to expand inland to the northern areas of Central America. At this time, the linked concepts of kingship and the stratification of society developed among the Maya of the highlands of Western Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador.



The Maya of the lowlands did not adopt the model of hierarchical society. Instead, tribal confederacies came about, able to mass for warfare but bowing to no central authority. The village patriarchs still held power over their own affairs. As the middle years of the Pre-Classic gave way, these local authorities began to take the roles of local kings. A hierarchy of kings and sub-kings began to develope each ruler of a small state, often owing tribute or allegiance to one or more other in a complex web of political interconnection.

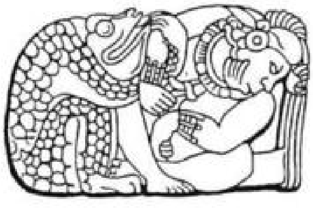
Over time the rank of "ahau," hereditary noble, became fully developed. From these "ahauob" the high king was chosen. From the pacific slopes of the southern highlands to the northern plains of Yucatán, the monuments to these "ahauob" were displayed. Text began to be inscribed alongside or upon the monuments, detailing the events and participants commemorated. The principle of kingship, legitimized through the use of the monuments and inscriptions, became entrenched among the Maya, and would remain so for a thousand years.

The period coinciding with the dissolution of the Roman Empire and the beginning of the Dark Ages in Europe saw the flowering of Classic Mayan Civilization (300 - 900 C.E.). Great architecture and art, pottery, writing mathematics, astronomy and history all blossomed in this period. Toward the end of the ninth century, copper began to appear among luxury goods, ornaments, weapons, and tools.

The number of kingdoms grew to about sixty at the height of Mayan culture in the eighth century. This age of greatest Mayan achievement lasted for over a century, before the culture began to decline. The exact reasons for this decline are not fully understood, but the jungles and rivers began to reclaim the cities carved into their midst. Over the next several centuries more and more Mayan cities were given over to the encroaching rainforests. The kingdoms shrank and became insular. The cities returned either to the jungle or to a shrunken form of the city-state at its height. By the time of the arrival of the Spanish, the Maya were far from their greatest extent. Yet it took over twenty years of constant warfare for the Conquistadors to bend them to Spanish rule.

The World of the Maya

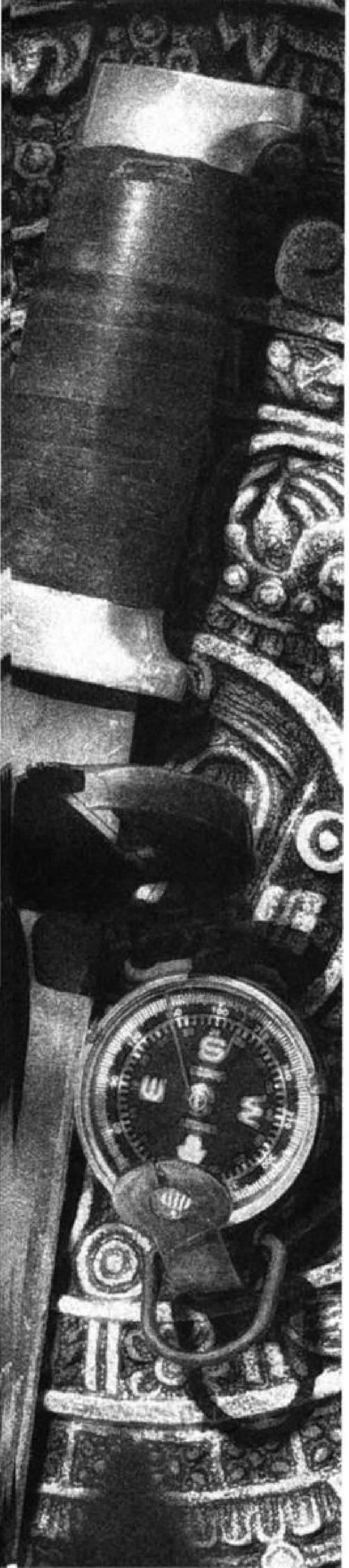
River travel was, and still is, the preferred method to move about in most of Mesoamerica. Many slow-moving, readily navigable rivers criss-cross the lands of the Maya, fed by rain that averages one hundred and fifty inches annually. In the rainy season, normally calm waterways can become deadly whitewater torrents. Conversely, in the dry season, some can dry up to the point of becoming mere trickles.



Over many millennia, rains in the north of the Yucatán have collected in low sinks and seeped rapidly into the ground to form vast and interconnected subterranean waterways. These waterways lead to the sea, as well as twisting networks of caverns, cenotes, and sinkholes. The underground rivers were reachable through the cave systems carved into the limestone by the trickling water. Where the caves reached the surface they formed natural wells called "*cenotl.*" The people of Mesoamerica viewed the cenotes with great reverence as entryways to the otherworld.

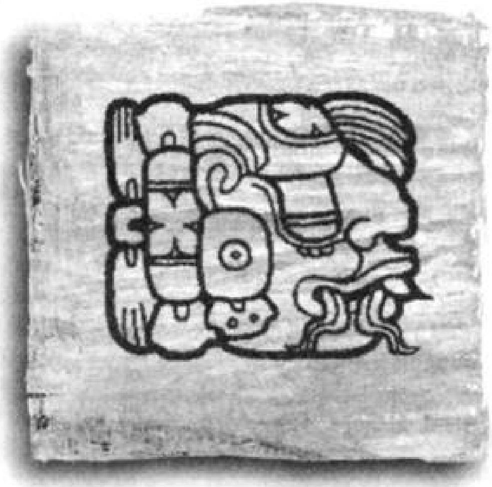
The cycle of life and death for the Maya was derived from the natural world around them. It was a world with a natural rhythm entirely different from the European. So too, was the world view which it spawned. To the European, and to most of western civilization, spring is seen as a time of rebirth after the cold, ice, and at least symbolic death of the winter months. To the Maya, spring was a time of drought, accompanied by the smoky pall of forest and field clearing. The heat of spring was inescapable, and as bitter in its way as winter was to the European. It filled lungs and parched throats with burning soot, threatened the light of the sun and the lives of the Maya. The forest bleeds from the rich winter green to near white as leaves pale and fall, trees dry out. To the Maya, spring was a time of death by hardship. It also became a time of death by battle and sacrifice.

Spring was the preferred season for warfare. The ground was dry. Armies could travel and maneuver easily. The fields could not be planted until the coming of the rains in late May or early June. It rapidly became necessary in the Mayan mind to make war at this time to procure the



sacrifices needed to ensure the coming of the rains. The blood of sacrifice, both of prisoners and of self, perpetuated the world.

Once warfare and blood offerings had brought the rains the land changed rapidly and dramatically. The season of battle and death was ended, sacrifices had allowed the sun to continue on his course. The bone-white forests fill out with verdant growth as the world is reborn.



In summer the rains come in torrential thunderous downpours that flash across the land in awesome displays of power, nurturing and destroying crops at the whim of the gods of rain and thunder. Eventually, these wild storms peter out into a short dry season in late July or early August. Called the Canicula by modern Maya, this short respite from the downpour allows the muddy fields to dry out before the coming of the fall rains with their steady all-day drizzle. These leisurely showers occasionally develop into the cold storms of winter, "nortes," and can last for days - a chilly, wet omnipresence.

Where western civilization today perceives the world primarily through an economically and scientifically oriented "filter," the Maya and other peoples of Mesoamerica defined reality through religious experience, natural and environmental forces, and the rituals that mitigated them. The language of Mesoamerican religion explained the place of humans in nature, the workings of the otherworld, the mysteries of life and death, in a way that religion does not function for most westerners today. Further, the religion of Mesoamerica went beyond the sphere of the sacred, structuring the practicalities of politics and economy. There was no distinction between the sacred and the secular for the Maya. They saw the physical world as a manifestation of, and a servant to, the otherworld. Existence was composed of two indivisible portions. One was the world in which the Maya lived out the lives. The other, which directly affected the first, was the world of the gods, the ancestors, and the rest of the supernatural. The role of humans was to pay homage to the supernatural world in deeds and devotion, to perpetuate both worlds through blood and sacrifice.

How the Maya Lived

The Maya lived on some of the most fertile land in Mesoamerica. Maize was the staple of the diet, supplemented with beans, squash, chilis, pumpkin, tomato, sweet potato, and less commonly, meat from deer or wild pig. Boiled corn mash was fermented and drunk as an intoxicant, and occasionally a type of wine was made from tree bark, honey, and water. As time progressed, turkeys, ducks, dogs, and a stingless species of bee were domesticated.

All field tending was done with digging sticks, as there were no ploughs or beasts of burden to pull them. In the areas covered by rainforest, keeping its encroachment at bay was a neverending task. Though it was assumed in the early part of this century that the Maya practiced a slash and burn farming technique, in truth they did not. A sophisticated system of terraced irrigation beds was employed to rejuvenate the soil and provide water when necessary. Canals from swamps or marshes near which all Mayan cities grew up, drew water to the raised fields.

Mayan cities were ordered around a core of ceremonial and administrative buildings and markets, with residences of first the upper and then the lower classes radiating outward from the center. Trade was a vital factor to the economy, and goods from far afield were always to be found in the markets of important cities. Barter was the normal means of commerce, but cacao beans served as currency when required. Each city, though it might have trade relationships, alliances, and even royal marriages to bind it to one or more of its neighbors, was essentially independent and operated in a style not dissimilar to that of the city-states of ancient Greece.

Within the city, raised roads of considerable quality and engineering skill were constructed of stones covered in rubble, and then a cement-like substance. These roads could be thirty feet wide or more and formed broad routes between temples, pyramids, and important administrative centers.

A humble residence would consist of an oval hut with a palm roof over one or two rooms. Communal cooking fires and storage buildings would be scattered around the huts. Homes of those with greater means were of wattle and daub covered in plaster and might contain several rooms and house an extended family of a dozen or more.

Nearly thirty major Maya cities and over one hundred lesser sites are known and have been excavated to some extent. Hundreds more await discovery in the dense forests and steaming jungles of southern Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, and the two Honduras.

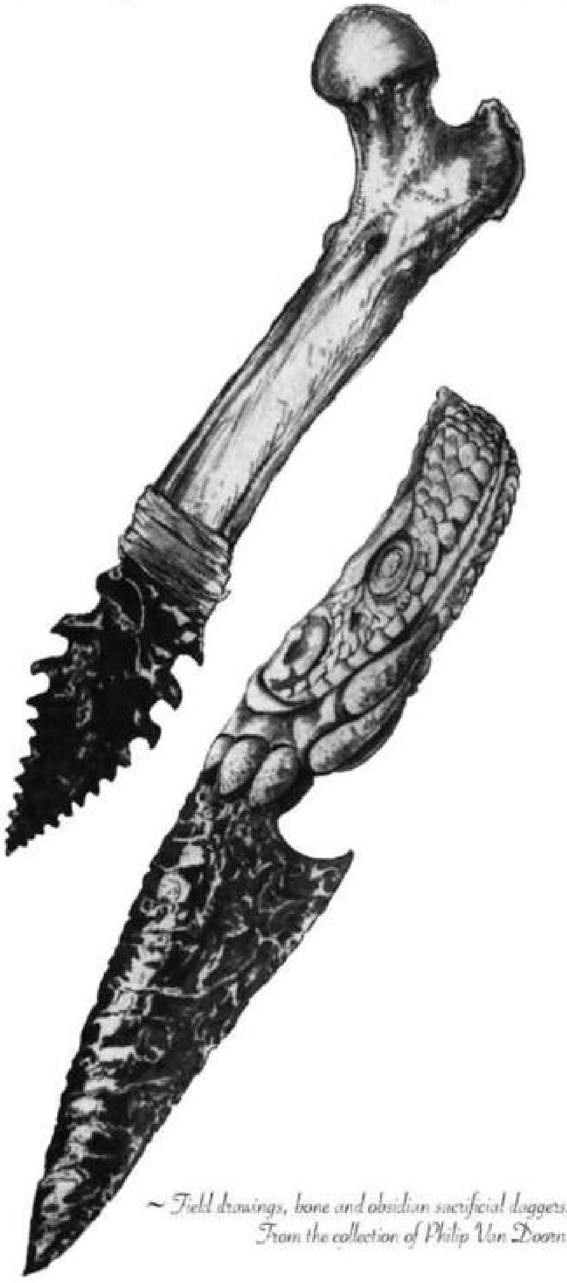
Maya Society

The society of the Maya was intimately bound up in their worldview and cosmology. Those with the greatest power were the priests (called "itza" after the supreme deity "Itzamna"). Elite in politics, culture, and religion, studying the heavens and consulting the calendar for portents, they appealed to the gods on behalf of the people. The priests were the ones who knew the wants and needs of the otherworld.

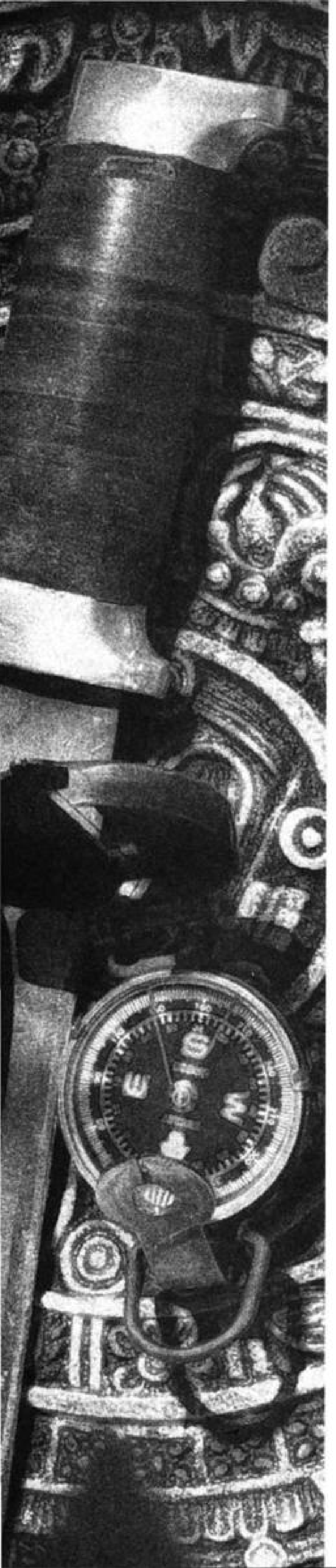
Itza would also perform the sacrifices in times of ceremony or necessity. Usually, the victim was painted blue and led up to the altar stone, where elderly men would hold the arms and legs. The priest then cut out the heart of the victim with a ritual dagger of obsidian. The idols of the gods were annointed with the blood of the sacrifice and the corpse was flung down the temple steps. Another priest would then flay the remains and dance in the skin, while onlookers consumed the flesh. The hands and feet were reserved for the priests.

Other methods were occasionally used - shooting dozens of arrows into the chest of the victim, hanging, or decapitation. Drowning was also common. At the sacred cenote of Chichén Itzá - a sinkhole dozens of yards below the surface, in a huge cavern carved out by the waters centuries earlier when they were higher - uninterrupted centuries of sacrifice are known to have occurred. On ceremonial occasions, or in times of drought or other natural disaster, hundreds of sacrifices, primarily prisoners and children, were brought to the cenote, covered in precious items, and cast into the dark waters below.

Choice sacrificial victims were orphans, slaves, virgins, captured warriors, and criminals. Highly prized choices were children, who were often stolen or purchased for the purpose. Animals such as dogs, jaguars, turtles, or turkeys were also sacrificed - sometimes the entire animal, sometimes only the heart. Recent archaeological investi-



~ Field drawings, bone and obsidian sacrificial daggers.
From the collection of Philip Van Doorn.



gation of the sacred cenote of Chichén Itzá has revealed huge quantities of precious items, as well as the bones of countless sacrifices, predominantly those of children. The frequency and extent of sacrifice seems to increase in the Post-Classical Period, possibly as a result of Toltec influence.

An equally important method of sacrifice was self-torture and mutilation. This involved the ritual bloodletting or piercing of one's ears, nose, tongue, lips, or sexual organs with obsidian blades or stingray spines. The practice was widespread and highly regarded. Wealthy individuals could purchase ornate self-torture implements, stingray spines covered in gold bands, jade or ceramic bowls for catching blood, or fantastically carved obsidian blades. Jade or gold plugs for ears, tongue, and lips were fashionable, perhaps because they advertised that one was pious and dutiful in self-sacrifice.

Just as sacrifice was an aspect of religious ritual, most of the physical objects that the Maya have left behind are related to the sacred in some way. Nearly all art of the Classical Period, for example, was of a religious nature. Even reliefs of royal dynasties were compiled out of a concern for the order of the universe and the place of humans in it. Mayan royalty acted in many ways as priests, even as manifestations of the gods' will. Their bloodletting and self-mutilation was of greater cosmic significance than that of normal people. The recording of their triumphs and successions was a way of measuring the success of the people in interpreting the universe.

Mayan artisans were skilled in the working of stone, both quarried stone for building and precious stones for ornamentation. Jade was the most highly prized, valued more greatly than gold. It would be worked into crowns, sacrificial items, masks, bracelets, bractates, ear and nose plugs, or rings. No upper class burial was complete without jade ornamentation of some sort, and members of the social elite might set jade in a tooth as a status symbol. Crafters of gold, shell, bone, and wood were also advanced. Weavers, basketmakers, leatherworkers, and feather-workers were all professions in any large Mayan community.

For most of Mayan history at least the upper classes followed the practice of deforming the facial features of infants in order to achieve a desired appearance. The birth of a child was considered a sign of the approval of the gods. A name would be assigned to the child by the itza in attendance. The forehead was bound with a board to flatten and elongate it. The eyes were trained to cross. As the child aged, earlobes, lips, and a nostril were pierced for jewelry. The effects of this practice can be seen in most examples of Mayan sculpture. What at first appears to be stylistic abstraction of the facial features is actually an accurate representation of the effects of this practice. The origin and the reasons behind it however are less well understood. Perhaps it was intended to make the Maya appear as the gods did. But the other Mesoamerican cultures seem to have carried on the custom sporadically or not at all. The unusual facial features on some Olmec statuary, which have been regarded as indicative of African influence by some, may actually reflect that they too practiced some variety of this fashion.

As a sign of childhood, girls wore a red shell dangling from a cord at their waists. At puberty it was removed, signifying the availability of the girl for marriage. Marriages were arranged. The father of a young man of eighteen would arrange with the father of a girl, usually younger. Prospective wives were expected to be capable at sewing, cooking, and other domestic chores. They were to behave with suitable decorum, observing such things as lowering their eyes and turning their backs, or stepping aside for a man. Female chastity outside of marriage and fidelity within marriage were vigorously encouraged. Adulterous behavior was punished by dropping a large stone on the head of the woman's lover from a great height.

Polygamy was the norm, as long as the man could support his wives. Among the lower classes, this usually was not possible. Husbands would usually live with the wife's family for several years, working with the father-in-law to prove his worth. Wives rarely interacted with their husbands socially. Divorce was very common and easily attainable through mutual consent.

Sickness was viewed as a sign of divine disfavor. A priest would be called in to prescribe rituals and potions, which often included blood, bat's wings, ground iguana, crocodile teeth, worms, animal feces, and herbs. Death was a thing to be feared, but the devout Maya hoped for an afterlife in the heavens. Suicides, those killed in battle or in childbirth, and sacrifices travelled immediately to the heavens, avoiding the underworld of cold and hunger.

The burials of the mighty were affairs of great pomp and extravagance, with lavish tombs and expensive grave goods prepared during life to equip the deceased for the afterlife. Many of the archaeological sites excavated throughout Mesoamerica contain such elaborate structures.

The burial of the poor, by contrast, was simple. The deceased was interred beneath the floor of the hut in which he or she lived. The structure then was abandoned. The body would be wrapped in a cloth, and such meager grave furnishings as the bereaved could afford to offer were placed alongside. Pottery, corn, or other small bits of personal property were common.

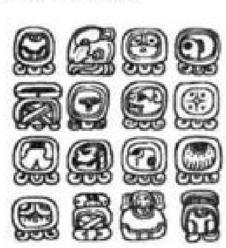
Mayan Documents

The Maya did not use parchment or vellum as the old world did for its writing surface. Instead, paper was made from the inner bark of the wild fig tree. The inner bark was soaked away from the rest, beaten with a stone, mixed with natural gum and cut into long strips. After being stiffened with lime, it was dried and put together into strips up to 20 feet in length. The strips were not cut but instead folded back and forth into a series of distinct panels. Inks were made from a variety of vegetable and mineral mixtures. Highly decorative, carved and painted wooden covers protected the books.

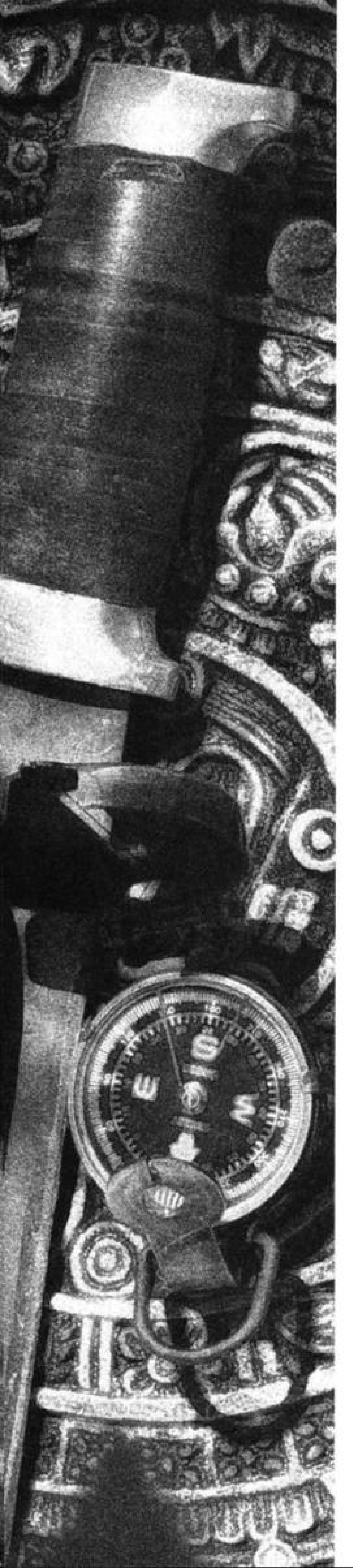
The majority of Mayan books were probably composed of historical, dynastic, and possibly prophetic information specific to the city of the book's origin and the ruler who had had it made. In 1561, Diego de Landa fired the last and greatest repository of Maya codices in the town of Mani.

"Among the Maya we found a great number of books written in their characters, and because they contained nothing but superstitions and falsehoods about the Devil, we burned them all, which the Indians felt most deeply, and over which they showed much sorrow." (Diego de Landa).

Only three Maya codices have survived to the twentieth century. The Dresden Codex was discovered in a Viennese collection in 1739. Composed of a number of almanacs of 260 days. Each almanac was further divided into 52 day periods. These divisions correspond to the Mesoamerican almanac dating system which divides the year into these periods, and also groups 52 year periods into increments called "katun".



The Paris Codex consists of eleven folded pages (there were at least two more that are now missing). It was discovered in Paris in 1859. Its subject is eleven "katun" of



historical events and prophecies, as well as almanacs, New Year ceremonies, and a Maya zodiac.

The Codex Troano (and its other half, discovered separately and called the Codex Cortesiano) are detailed in the biography of the Abbe Brasseur de Bourbourg below. The Codex Cortesiano was first discovered in 1880 when scholar Leon de Rosny found what was purported to be a manuscript that had belonged to Hernán Cortés. In fact, it was a continuation of the Codex Troano, translated and published only a decade before by the Abbe Brasseur de Bourbourg. Known collectively as the Codex Tro-Cortesiano, they later became known as the Madrid Codex in 1945.

Maya Cosmology

The existence of the Maya was composed of a three layered realm. The starry reaches of heaven, the middleworld of the earth - made abundant with the blood of kings and sacrifices, and the underworld below. These regions were not distinct and isolated from each other. Each permeated the others. Each was alive and active, filled with supernatural power.

The sky was a great crocodilian monster who brought the rains when it shed is blood in accompaniment to sacrifices in the middleworld. The underworld, called Xibalba, had plants, animals, inhabitants, and a landscape similar to the middleworld. At night Xibalba rotated to reside over the middleworld as the night sky.

The middleworld was no less sacred than the realms above and below. The Maya perceived it as a region riding the back of a great caiman or turtle on a primordial sea. At the center of the middleworld was the Worldtree - Wacah Chan, which passed through and existed in all three realms simultaneously. Its branches spread through the heavens, its roots in the underworld, its trunk passing through the land of the Maya.

Just as Wacah Chan passed above and below the middleworld, other high and low points were possible means of access to the other realms. A cave or cenote, mountaintop or pyramid apex brought worshippers within reach of the cosmic mysteries, and could act as passages to the worlds beyond.

The kings of the Maya lived as representatives of Wacah Chan. Through royal bloodletting, the king could make the Worldtree manifest in his temple, opening the awesome gateway to the other realms. The gateway could be opened to all manner of otherworldly influences. Once brought into the world of the Maya, these otherworldly creatures could manifest themselves in the flesh of their worshippers. Bloodletting was a central practice to Maya religion, as it was the means by which the otherworldly manifestation could be achieved.

The gateway could be opened to all manner of otherworldly influences.

The *Popul Vuh*

The *Popol Vuh* is a Mayan document that relates a myth cycle recording the ordering of the universe through the actions of the gods. The central tale is the descent into the otherworld by two twins in order to limit the powers of Death. Other tales record the creation of the world and the Wacah Chan, the creation of humans, and describe the outer powers. Below is the tale of the descent of the heroic twins into the underworld to challenge death.

There was a set of twins who were summoned to Xibalba because they played

The Ages of the Maya World

First Age - The Age of the Adjusters

The Adjusters were a race of dwarves who lived in eternal darkness. They are responsible for the building of the ruined temples which the Maya would often find near their cities. When the first sun rose, these people were turned to stone. A great flood brought this age to a close.

Second Age - The Age of the Offenders

In this age a people known only as the Offenders came to power. Nothing else is known of them today. Their world too, was destroyed by a cataclysmic flood.

Third Age - The Age of the Maya

This is the age of the Maya themselves. But it was foretold that this age too would end in a deluge and the Maya would fall.

Fourth Age

In this, the current age, the land of Yucatán is home to many disparate peoples.

the ball game too noisily and kept the underworld from sleeping during the day. These two twins, Hun-Hunaphu and Vucub-Hunahpu, were tricked by the Lords of Death, defeated in the trials to which they were set, and sacrificed. One was buried under the ball court, the skull of the other was hung from a gourd tree as a warning to others who might offend the masters of the underworld.

The daughter of one of the Lords of Death found the skull and was impregnated when it spit into her hand. Terrified that she might be slain be her father, she fled to the middleworld. There she wandered until she met the mother of the dead twins. She then gave birth to another pair of twins, Hunahpu and Xbalanque.

The twins grew to godhood amid many adventures and eventually found the ball game equipment of their father hidden by their grandmother after the death of her sons.

Hunahpu and Xbalanque became great ball players, and in so doing raised the wrath of the Xibalbans, who dwelt beneath the ball court. They were called as their fathers had been before them to Xibalba, to soothe the ire of the Lords of Death. In the underworld, they were told that they would play the ball game on the next day and given accommodations for the night.

On the first night their accommodations were in the Dark House. Here they were given a torch and three

The Popol Vuh records great detail about the Xibalba of the Maya, and the way in which the gods may interact with it and with the Lords of Death. Below is a Mexican folktale concerning a visit to the underworld by ordinary folk, a dead soul and her live husband. While it bears certain similarities to the information contained in the Popol Vuh, it also shows how the underworld might be for mere human beings in the following tale:

A man whose wife had just died missed her very much. When he went to her grave, he saw her "isimi," her soul. The soul was about two feet in height, and told him it was starting its journey to the underworld and the embrace of Mother Scorpion (a spirit of the hereafter).

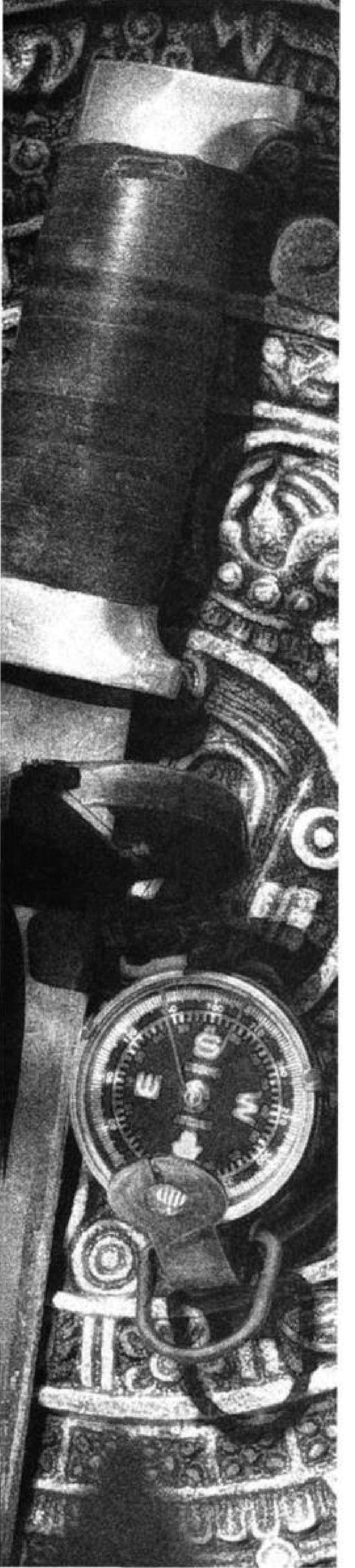
The man wanted to go with his wife but she told him that that was impossible. He insisted and so they set out together. They came to a place with many moths. These frightened the soul of the wife and she could not proceed. Her husband frightened the moths away and the couple continued on.

They came to a bridge made of a single human hair. The wife nimbly walked across it, but the husband could not, so he jumped across the chasm. Below him was a vast gorge filled with boiling water attended by sikla birds - horrible, demonic raptors.

Then they came to a large river, where they were met by a dog paddling a canoe. The river swarmed with small fierce fish, which the soul feared were sharks. On the far shore they could see the land of Mother Scorpion. On this river, the souls of the wicked would always overturn the canoe and the tiny fish would become huge and eat the soul. But the canoe did not overturn, and the wife made her journey easily.

When it came to the husband's turn, he found that he could not fit into the canoe, so he must swim alongside it across the river. But to him, the fish were not sharks and he passed them to the other shore and his wife.

On the far shore, Mother Scorpion was an exceedingly tall and stout woman with many breasts. She was very angry and demanded that the husband leave. But when he begged to stay with his beloved wife, Mother Scorpion relented. He could remain so long as he bore the rules of the land of the dead. So did the husband live among the dead souls.



cigars and told to keep them all lit until dawn. They tricked the lords of death by placing the fireflies on the tips of the cigars and substituting a macaw's tail for the torch.

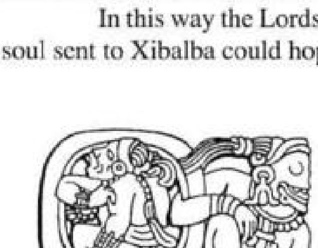
The next day the twins played the ball game with the Xibalbans and allowed themselves to lose. Four bowls of flowers had been wagered upon the game and the twins had until morning to gather the petals. Worse, the Lords put the twins in Razor House, a building filled with obsidian blades, eager for blood. The twins convinced the blades to cease moving by promising them the flesh of animals thereafter. Then they sent leaf-cutter ants to bring the flowers back from the gardens of the Lords of Death. The Lords were enraged, but were unable to protest when they found that they had been paid with their own blossoms.

The twins continued to play the ball game by day and be tested by night. They survived the Cold House, which was full of freezing wind and hail; Jaguar House, filled with ravenous jaguars; Fire House, filled with raging flames. In a house filled with shrieking bloodthirsty bats the twins sheltered inside their blowguns. However, just before dawn, Hunahpu peeked out of his shelter and had his head struck from his shoulders by the bat god, Camazotz. The head rolled out onto the ball court. To conceal the loss, Xbalanque carved a replacement from a squash and placed it on his brother's shoulders. The ball for the game that day was the severed head of Hunahpu, but Xbalanque was prepared for the trickery of the Xibalbans. He kicked the head into the high grass at the side of the ball court and a rabbit bounded out like a ball with the Xibalbans in pursuit. He then substituted the head for the squash on his brothers shoulders and threw the squash into the grass. When the Lords were called back, they raged again when the ball shattered and scattered squash seeds all over the ball court. They had been cheated once more.

Finally, the Lords of Death decided to burn the twins, but the twins prepared for this end and leapt into the fire having made sure of their rejuvenation by commanding a pair of seers to advise the Lords of Death to dispose of the remains in the river. Thus the ashes were scattered on the river and carried along for three days until the twins restored themselves, human in appearance but with the faces of catfish. The next day they were fully human and, masquerading as vagabond actors, began to perform miraculous dances. Hearing of the dances of the actors, the Lords of Death called for the actors to be presented to them for their entertainment.

In the greatest dance one of the twins decapitated and disemboweled the other and brought him back to life. The Lords of Death clamored to learn the secret of this dance for themselves. The twins gladly performed the first part of the trick on the assembled Lords of Death, then refused to make them whole again.

In this way the Lords of Death were outwitted and hope given to humankind. A soul sent to Xibalba could hope to cheat the Lords of death in the same way.



The Fall of the Maya

The exact cause of the slow decline of the Mayan world is not understood. Some evidence exists to suggest that there was pressure from tribes to the north. Dates on smashed stelae at abandoned sites are commonly from the late eighth to the late tenth centuries of the Common Era. In such places, some buildings appear to have been abandoned in the midst of construction. This suggest that there might have been some sudden cause for the fall of the Maya. The great migration of the Nahua (the progenitors of the Aztecs) was ongoing at the same approximate time as the decline of the Maya. Perhaps people displaced by these invasions encroached upon the Maya, as was the case with the Toltecs at Chichén Itzá.

In recent excavations of many Maya burials, skeletal examination has shown that many of the interred had signs of hardship and disease generally associated with long term malnutrition. Perhaps the population of at least some Mayan cities was no longer capable of supporting itself.

Perhaps it was a combination of both of these phenomena. With the single exception of the hybrid Toltec-Maya culture around Chichén Itzá, the archaeological record does not show any invader coming in and settling. If there were invaders, they came as raiders, not as conquerors.

The single corner of the Maya world to have survived the slow dissolution of the rest is the Toltec-Maya culture of Chichén Itzá. Where other sites, once powerful and proud, show slow decay, or rapid abandonment, Chichén Itzá flourished in the twilight of the civilization from which it came. The nature of the relationship between the Maya and the Toltec at Chichén Itzá is not clear. Were they invaders and conquerors, or successful mercenaries? Were the warlike and comparatively unsophisticated Toltecs peacefully assimilated into the rich and ancient world of the Maya?

Whatever the relationship between the two peoples, the renaissance at Chichén Itzá seems to have stressed battle and sacrifice in a way that they never had been in the Classical Period. This renaissance was only a respite, however. By the early thirteenth century, it too had fallen into ruins. Between the fall of Chichén Itzá and the arrival of the Spanish, the scattered fragments of Mayan civilization were overshadowed, and in many case conquered, by the warlike and less advanced Aztecs of central Mexico. Independent Mayan culture in this period centered around Mayapán in the Yucatán. Here the Maya hired fierce Mexican mercenaries to defend the walled city. The architecture and art at Mayapán show a distinct fall in quality from the heights achieved in the Classical Period. Mayapán was constantly in conflict with other cities of the peninsula and beyond. In 1441 C.E., it is was sacked and burned.

The end of the fifteenth century saw the Yucatán, last province of the independent Maya, in the hands of sixteen separate and feuding dynasties, each with its own army, cities, and interests. Warfare, motivated by the need for property, land, and sacrifices, was constant. The upheaval was perhaps increased by the succession of natural disasters that plagued the area for most of the late fifteenth century. Many Maya died from earthquakes, flash floods, droughts, and of course the warfare and waves of sacrifice that these natural forces inspired. This was the state of the Mayan world at the arrival of the Spanish.

Cities of the Maya

The Maya were an extremely urban people by ancient standards. A city was at the center of every political unit and there were probably hundreds of significant settlements scattered over the whole of Mesoamerica during the time of the Maya. Some cities, of course might be situated over older sites, scavenging stone for building, refurbishing old streets, etc. But only a little over one hundred sites and a few dozen cities have been found up to the present. Since there are many cities that are mentioned in various Maya records that do not seem to correspond to any of the known sites, there must be many sites still awaiting discovery.

Below you will find short descriptions of a number of Mayan cities and other sites of interest. Keepers can use this information as they see fit, but the descriptions are not intended to be complete. Rather they intend to give you the main points and the most interesting features of each location. Full descriptions of each city are relatively easy to find in any good library.

As Keeper, you need not feel constrained to limit yourself to the sites mentioned here. There are undoubtedly a number of ancient sites that have not yet come to light, and a number of those that are now known were only rumor in the period before World War Two. If you want a city of your own for your own purposes, go to it. In that case, you may want to use any number of details from the summaries provided here to fill out the details of your creation.

The Balankanche Caves - Below the ruins of Chichén Itzá, this complex of caves contains hundreds of incense burners and ritual "metates" (corn grinders). Stalagmites and stalactites abound throughout the caverns and the atmosphere is hot and humid at all times. The temperature rises as the caves deepen, especially around the shallow subterranean lake that lies at the bottom of some tunnels.

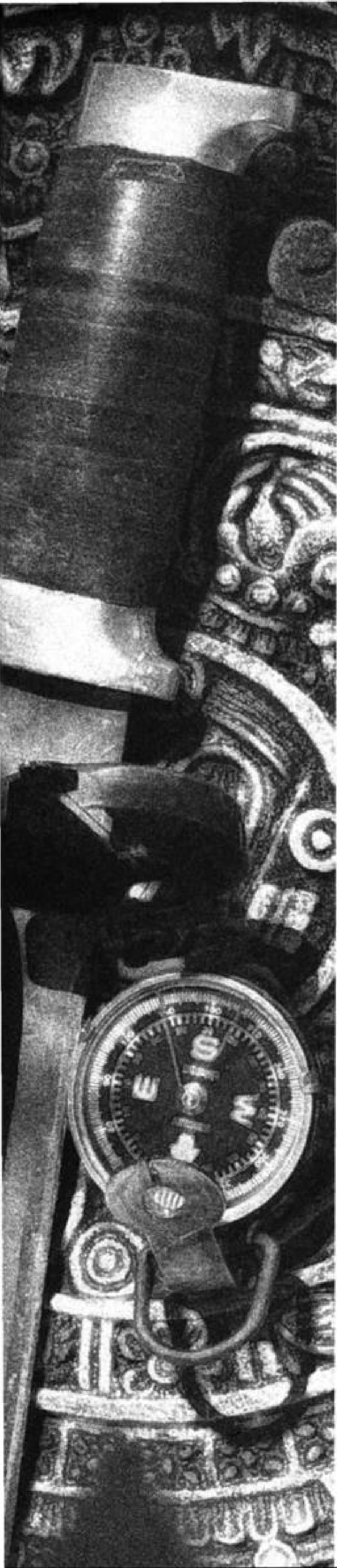
Calixtlahuaca, Mexico - sculpted stone head dated to 200 C.E. was excavated here. The figure depicts a bearded man with non-native facial features. Some associate the artistic style with Classical Rome.

Caracol - The largest Maya city in what became British Honduras. It also possesses the tallest pyramid found thus far in that country at 137 feet. Caracol was discovered by chicleros only in 1936, and it was not even mentioned in the records found so far by its neighbors. Glyphs there mention other known cities however. In 562 C.E., Caracol conquered Tikal and became the most powerful city of its time. Strangely, there is no water source near the site, nor has one been discovered which could have served its inhabitants centuries ago.

El Cerbal - A Maya site near Peten Itza - many interesting stelae have been found here depicting bearded and mustached warriors with features reminiscent of Mediterranean peoples.

Chiquibal Caves - eight miles south of Caracol in British Honduras. The largest complex of natural caverns and tunnels in Central America. Includes the single largest cavern room in the western hemisphere. The complex is still largely unmapped and unexplored. Some authorities suspect the existence of caves and tunnels connecting the complex to the ancient site at Caracol.

Chichén Itzá - The Yucatec Maya say that the "Maya King"



lives beneath the ground at Chichén Itzá and will return to lead the others who reside below the earth. American psychic Edgar Cayce claimed that a huge storehouse of ancient learning, recorded on charged crystals, awaited discovery in a structure referred to as the "Hall of records." A similar library of crystals is supposed to be buried somewhere under the Great Pyramid. Both are said to have been left, not by the Maya or even the Olmecs, but by the ancient Atlanteans (see the profiles of Waldeck, Augustus le Plongeon, and Mitchell-Hedges, among others for more on the Atlantean theory).

Other, slightly more credible, stories have arisen that claim that the unlooted Great Maya Hall of Records awaits discovery amid these diminutive structures. Stocked with dozens of manuscripts from before the conquest. This hall would increase the humber of pre-Columbian native documents dramatically. Chichén Itzá is often suggested as the site of this undiscovered treasure. Coba is also mentioned in this regard.

Cholula - site of a huge pyramid one hundred and eighty one feet tall and roughly double that from side to side. A Catholic Church now perches on the summit. A small opening on the east side of the base of the pyramid allows access to bewildering maze of twisting passages adorned with murals and frescoes.

Comacalco - A major Mayan port city near modern day Villahermosa. Entirely constructed of baked mud bricks, where traditional Mayan construction was of stone, it is unique in Mesoamerica.

Many of their bricks have inscriptions, most containing Maya hieroglyphs but a significant few have been identified as Old World characters. Mexican archaeologists have found 3671 inscribed bricks, of which 640 are supposed to have Old World inscriptions in such diverse languages as Arabic, Phoenician, Libyan, Egyptian, Ogam (the runic script of the ancient Celts), Tifinig, Chinese, and Burmese. The bricks have been tentatively dated to between 0 to 400 C.E.

Copán - Near the small, modern day village of Copán Ruinas is the ancient city of Copán. The greatest feature of the site is referred to now as the hieroglyphic stairway. Sixty-three steps covered in glyphs record the history of the rulers of Copán up to the year 765 C.E. and the reign of King Smoke Shell. The steps seem to have been scrambled and reassembled at some unknown time in the past, as the inscriptions make little sense to read. It has also been suggested that the rearrangement was deliberate in order to form a code, or possibly to hide some important detail. In 1989, a tomb was discovered behind the stairway. It has not yet been explored.

An Olmec site, Piedra Canteada, is situated near Copán. Archaeological evidence from the site dates its collapse at around 900 B.C.E., the same time as San Lorenzo.

Some investigators of Copán have noted the many statues with what appear to be oriental features.

Cozumel - An important city to the goddess Ixchel, Lady of the Rainbow, consort of Itzamna. Pilgrims, especially pregnant women, would come from miles away to petition at her shrine for an easy birth and a healthy baby. Little of Mayan Cozumel remains. Most of the buildings were torn down and their stone reused in Spanish construction.

Cuasran - the Indians of southern Mesoamerica tell of Solcano Cuasran, a Maya man who fled the Spanish during the Conquest. Through some unknown means he is said to live to the present in pre-Columbian splendor beneath a volcano. Occasionally he still takes prisoners to ease his life and sacrifice to the old gods.

The Lost City of Cuidad Blanca - Scattered tales remember an ancient empire that flourished in the jungles of the southeast coast. In the sixteenth century, Spanish invaders heard tales of a mysterious white city lost in the Honduran rainforest. Many are said to have seen it, it is even tentatively marked on some of the oldest Spanish maps of the region, but has never been reliably discovered.

In 1933, William Duncan Strong explored the Mosquito Coast for five months, starting at Puerto Castillo and travelling generally along the course of the Patuca River. His intent was to establish whether Mayan culture extended beyond Copán. The expedition discovered a rectangular stone ruin one hundred feet in length on the Bonita River. There was evidence to suggest a much larger inhabited area in the remote past. The style of the architecture and art of the site was similar to that of the Maya but distinct. Could this have been the ruins of the lost white city?

Lubaantun - First discovered by Thomas Gann in 1903 and explored under the commission of the British Governor. Modest excavations were carried out under the aegis of Harvard University in 1915, under the direction of R.E. Merwin. In 1924, Gann was again working the site when he was joined by F.A. Mitchell-Hedges and his adoptive daughter, Anna. Excavations were conducted seasonally for several years (See the biography of F.A. Mitchell-Hedges, for more on the dig at Lubaantun).

Lubaantun is unique in the Maya world. Its structures are constructed of dry-fitted stones with almost none of the extensive stone carving so common at other Maya sites. The pyramids are also unusual, with smooth, rounded corners. This style of pyramid is found in only a few locales along the Usumacinta River to the north. No palace or family dwellings remain, only tombs surround the pyramid.

Forty feet in height, the round-shouldered pyramid dominates Lubaantun, which is arranged in a series of plazas that climb the hill upon which the site is located. Gann felt that the site, of which very little was actually excavated under his direction, was far older than the Maya. It has been suggested that there are similarities of design and construction between Lubaantun and Lixus, a Phoenician city in Morocco.

Palenque - This westernmost of the Maya city-states was in what is now Chiapas, on the Usumacinta River. The city itself is located among the wooded foothills overlooking the coastal plain that reaches to the Gulf of Mexico.

Until around 600 C.E. Palenque was small and unimpressive. In 615, a new ruler, Pacal (sometimes called Pacal Votan, perhaps after the possible ancient founder of the city) succeeded to the throne at the age of twelve. Over the course of his reign, and then those of his two sons, Chan-Balan and Kan-Xul II, the city grew to become a powerful governing center for the region.

Under Chan-Balan and then Kan-Xul, Pacal's successors, the city grew and prospered. A four-storied tower, unique in Mayan architecture, was added to the palace at this time. An aqueduct, a feature of some, but not all large Mayan cities, carried water to the city center and the palace from the river nearby.

Dating from the height of Maya civilization, Palenque is a city of many fine buildings, ornamented with fine stucco and plasterwork. The greatest is the Temple of

The ruins of Palenque were discovered in 1773 by Friar Ramon de Ordonez y Aguilar of Cuidad Rio. Having heard of the site he had his parishioners bear him there by litter. He was so stunned by the magnificence of the site that, upon his return to his parish he wrote, "A History of the Creation of Heaven and Earth," in which he explained that the city, which he named "the City of Serpents," was built in remote antiquity by a people who came from across the Atlantic under the command of a leader named Votan, whose sacred animal was the serpent.

Ordonez claimed that the source for his assertions was a book in the local Quiche language, translated from a lost work by Votan himself. The original, Ordonez asserted, had been burned by Bishop Nunez de la Vega of Chiapas in 1691.

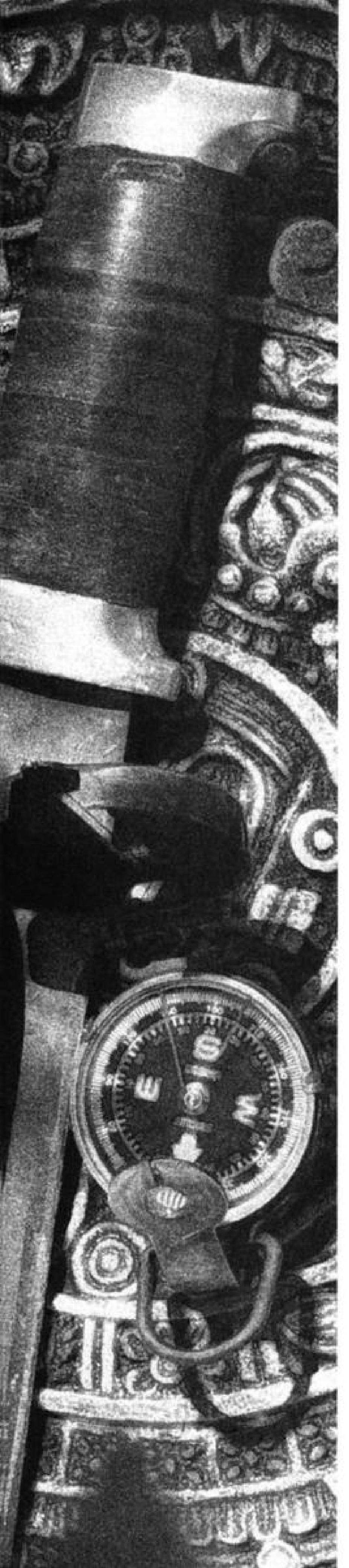
Votan set out from a land called Chivin (Ordonez places Chivin at Tripoli) and arrived at the Yucatán via the "Dwelling of the Thirteen," which Ordonez equates to the Canary Islands. After making landfall in what was probably Hispaniola, Votan continued to the coast of Mexico, up the Usumacinta River to found the city known in Ordonez time as Palenque.

The travellers are described as having arrived dressed in long robes, subjecting the natives bloodlessly to the rule of Votan, then taking the daughters of the chiefs as his consorts.

Bishop Nunez also refers to Votan's books, saying that the ancient traveller listed the ancient names of the places that he traversed. At one place, known as Huchueta, Votan chose a local woman to guard a treasure that he placed in a subterranean house. Bishop Nunez spared no expense to locate this treasure and confiscated it from its guardians. The entirety of the treasure was several leaded clay jars, green stones, and a number of manuscripts. Nunez had it publicly burned.

Votan is said to have returned four times to his Valum Chivin over the ocean. Upon one such return, it is said that Votan came upon a magnificent temple reaching up to heaven. Bishop Nunez equates this with the biblical Tower of Babel. This would place Votan's lifetime in the early years of the Olmecs (Another source, with far less detail regarding everything else concerning Votan, dates his arrival in the new World to 1000 B.C.E.).

Ordonez sent his account to Charles III of Spain, who sent explorers to excavate Palenque. The party systematically looted the city for years, sending precious objects back as curiosities to be quickly forgotten by the Royal court. The report by Charles' men languished in the archives, unnoticed except by a few scholars.



the Inscriptions. In 1948, atop the nine-step pyramid, a passage was discovered under the floor. After four years of excavation, the passage was cleared of blockages, and the tomb of Pacal was discovered at the end of a long descending stairway.

Glyph-covered stone panels detailing his life line the walls. The ancestry of the king, his family, and his accomplishments are recorded for the judges of the underworld. The sarcophagus measures five and a half feet high, nearly seven feet wide and almost ten feet long. The lid, weighing five tons, is over twelve feet long, seven feet wide and eight inches thick. The surface of the coffin depicts Pacal's reception in the underworld. The painted walls of the interior of the tomb show the nine Lords of Death in attendance. A very tall Maya man lies within, ornamented with jade ear-plugs, pendants, beads, rings, and a mask of linked jade plates.

Quirigua - famous for its huge stelae, twenty feet and more in height, the largest of Mayan manufacture. They are memorials, recording the funerals of prominent ancient Maya.

Of equal interest are the large zoomorphic statues. Stones four feet high and eight to ten feet long, they portray draconic or reptilian monsters, though they do not seem to represent alligators or crocodiles, sometimes with a man sticking out of the mouth.

Tikal - Much of the exploration of Tikal was done by Teobert Maler in the latter years of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth. Thus Tikal is a city of which little was known in the period of play, but there was an expedition on site investigating for much of that time. Information was slow to filter out however, because Maler was concerned with sending several huge carved stone panels to the Berlin Museum.

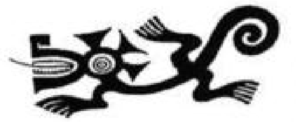
Topoxte - just east of Tikal lie the ruins of a miniature city. The architecture is less than half the size seen elsewhere. It has been suggested that this site was built by or dedicated to the Alux, a race of otherworldly little people known to the Maya. Many Maya sites have, usually situated directly in front of the main temple, an area of miniature huts with exceptionally low entryways. Perhaps dwarfism was sacred to the Maya. Perhaps the huts acted as votive shrines to the Alux. Perhaps a race of pygmies lived alongside the Maya.

Below is a report from 1977, which purports to record the sighting of an Alux. The Keeper could easily substitute a date in keeping with events in your story.

". . . Xuc raised his head and peered out cautiously. What he saw shook him to the very foundation of his traditional Indian stoicism. Outlined in the moonlight was a tiny man. His head was disproportionately large, his beard was jet-black, and he was clad in a white 'lupile,' a Mayan dresslike garment or tunic. Slung over his shoulder was a standard-sized machete almost as long as the man was tall." (Bill Mack, "Mexico's Little People," *Fate*, August 1984).

Tulúm - These ruins date from 900 C.E. or later. Perched on cliffs overlooking the bright blue-green waters of the Caribbean, Tulúm was a walled city with a grid of pre-planned streets and five gates. All the structures here are of a smaller scale than most other Maya sites and call to mind other sites rumored in legend to be the haunts of the Alux.

Uxmal - Referred to as the "City of the Magicians," this Mayan city was ruled by the Xiu dynasty when it was at its height in the tenth century C.E. Though most of its structures are typical of other Maya sites, it does contain one enigmatic ruin - a temple of the same round-shouldered style as the pyramid at Lubaantun. Near Uxmal are the Loltun Caves, where mammoth bones and many carvings, probably votive in nature, have been found. The style of the carvings found here is unlike that of any other Mesoamerican site.



Zacatenco - In the final years of the nineteenth century, Sir Leonard Wooley achieved great reknown when he discovered what was believed to be evidence of of the Biblical Great Flood at Ur, a major city of ancient Babylonia. Shortly thereafter, while digging at the Mayan site at Zacatenco, archaeologist Zelia Nuttal made a similarly startling discovery. A thick layer of alluvial mud reminiscent of the Old World find and at a comparable geological strata.

Zelia Nuttal believed that she had unearthed evidence of the Great Flood of the Old Testament in the New World. That the Maya believed in at least one world wide flood is demonstrated in the *Popol Vuh* and elsewhere. Both the dwarfish people of the First Age and the wooden people of the Second Age, created before mankind, were wiped out in an epic floods. According to Nuttal, the region of Lake Texcoco remained under water for five centuries or more. She determined that the flood must have occurred approximately three thousand years ago.

The Aztecs

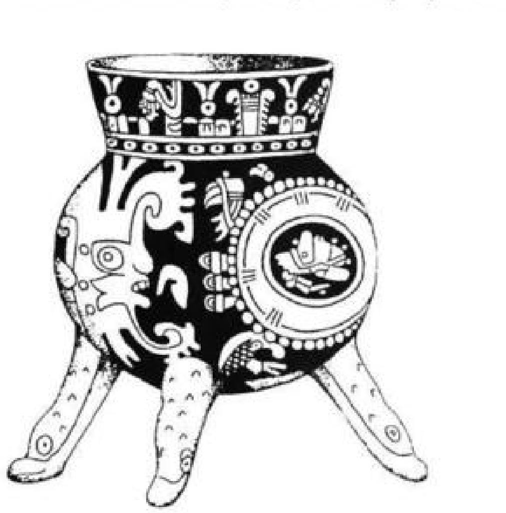
Around the beginning of the fourteenth century, in one of the waves of Nahua migrations from the north, one minor, unprepossessing group of Nahua known as the Mexica ("mesh-i-ca") moved south as well. Their exact point of origin is not known, but Nahuatl, the language of these people, is similar to that of the Shoshone and the Utes of the southwestern United States.

The Aztec document known as the Mendoza Codex contains the legend of the Aztec settlement. Arriving in what is now called the Valley of Mexico in the fourteenth century C.E., they were driven away from the good land by the stronger, local tribes. After hardship and wandering the Mexica determined to make their home at the site of what they held to be a powerful portent. At the shore of a small, swamp lake, the Mexica priests beheld an eagle in mortal combat with a serpent. This was a vision sent by the patron deity of the Azteca, Huitzilopochtli, "Left-Handed Hummingbird," a warrior god whose symbol was the eagle. They settled on a small island in what came to be called Lake Texcoco. The settlement, they named Tenochtitlan. In less than two centuries, this small group of beleaguered "invaders" would come to control most of what is now Mexico and exert considerable influence of regions farther afield. Their conquests brought slaves and riches, sacrifices and tribute from all over Central America. Amid a collection of cultures famed for human sacrifice on a grand scale, they earned a reputation for warlike bloodthirstiness.

The records left by other tribes of the region are not so kind regarding the Aztecs origins. The Mexica ate snakes and other creatures considered vermin by the local tribes. They were much more favorably inclined to human sacrifice. Perhaps most significantly, the Mexica were constantly lacking in females. This drove them to raid the neighboring tribes for wives. None of these factors ingratiated the new people to the established tribes of the region and resulted in their being driven into the marginal territory near Lake Texcoco.

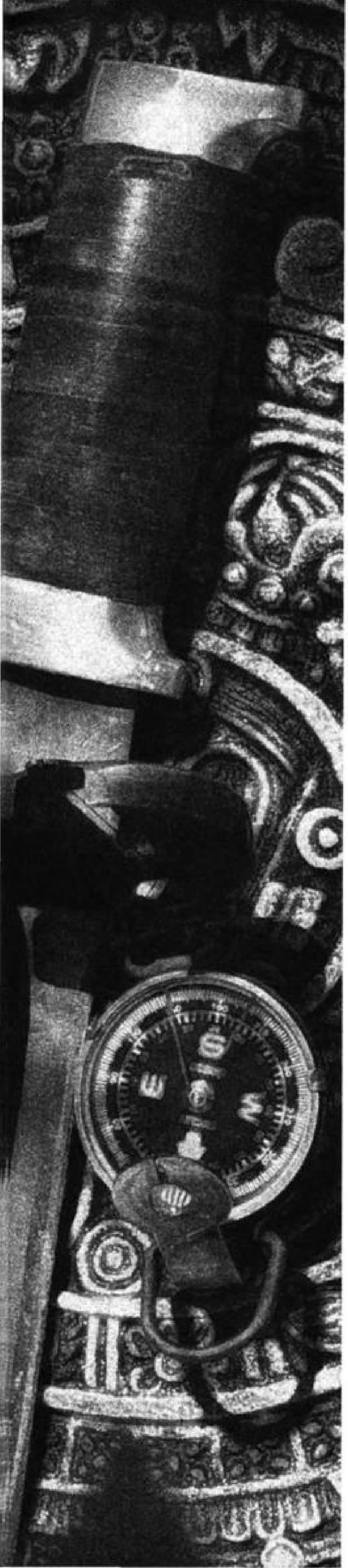
Tenochtitlan, on the site of modern day Mexico City, though this fact was not confirmed until excavations in 1922, means "cactus in the field." Over the course of the fifteenth century it grew from the camp of a group of dispirited refugees to a city of roughly two hundred thousand by the time of the arrival of the Spanish. Allied with the nearby cities of Tlacopan and Texcoco, the Aztecs soon came to dominate the entirety of the central valley and slowly expanded to control nearly all of Mexico.

Artificial islands were formed on the lake - composed of dredged earth, human debris, and flood-eroded soil from the mountains. The city itself was expanded in like fashion. The surrounding islands were made into rich fields and provided for the agricultural need of the city. Maize and beans were the staple crops of the peoples' diet.



The economy was quite sophisticated, based on trade with and the conquest of neighboring tribes. Luxury goods from beyond the boundaries of Aztec control were in great demand by the nobility.

An aqueduct and dike system brought water to the city from the mountains. Within Tenochtitlan, streets and buildings were laid out with geometric precision. Temples, a huge marketplace, parks, aviaries, and zoos were all found in the capital.



Aztecs were fond of bright colors - exterior walls, murals, and statuary were all garishly painted. Interiors were generally left undecorated so as not to attract monsters. For the same reason rooms had no windows, only a slit in the roof to allow smoke to escape. Expansion of such structures was often haphazard, with rooms added as requirements changed. Here walls could be decorated by featherwork, fabrics, or animal skins. Elaborate gardens and often canals separated the homes of the rich.

Less grand houses were simple reed huts, squat structures with flat roofs. Flowers were often planted between such homes. Floors were of stamped earth, covered in deerskin if it could be afforded.

The central edifice of Tenochtitlan, and the most important, was the great pyramidal temple and its surrounding buildings. At the summit of the pyramid, were two temples. One of these was to the hummingbird-feathered war god, Huitzilopochtli, with silver representations of human hearts around his neck. The priests of Huitzilopochlti wore dark-hooded garments soaked in human blood which they never cleaned as a sign of respect to their god. They filed their teeth to points, never cut their blood-encrusted hair, tore the edges of their ears and tattooed their faces to enhance their already savage appearance. Wherever they went, clouds of incense followed from the burners of their attendants. In times of peace they were harbingers of bloody sacrifice. In war they were terrifying specters, berserk and fearless of death.

The priesthood lived withdrawn, almost cloistered lives, and had nothing to do with women. The were revered and feared by the populace. Hallucinogenic mushrooms were a constant part of the paraphernalia of priesthood.

Religion

Religious practice seems to have followed the bloodiest rites known to have been in use among the Toltecs and the Olmecs before them.

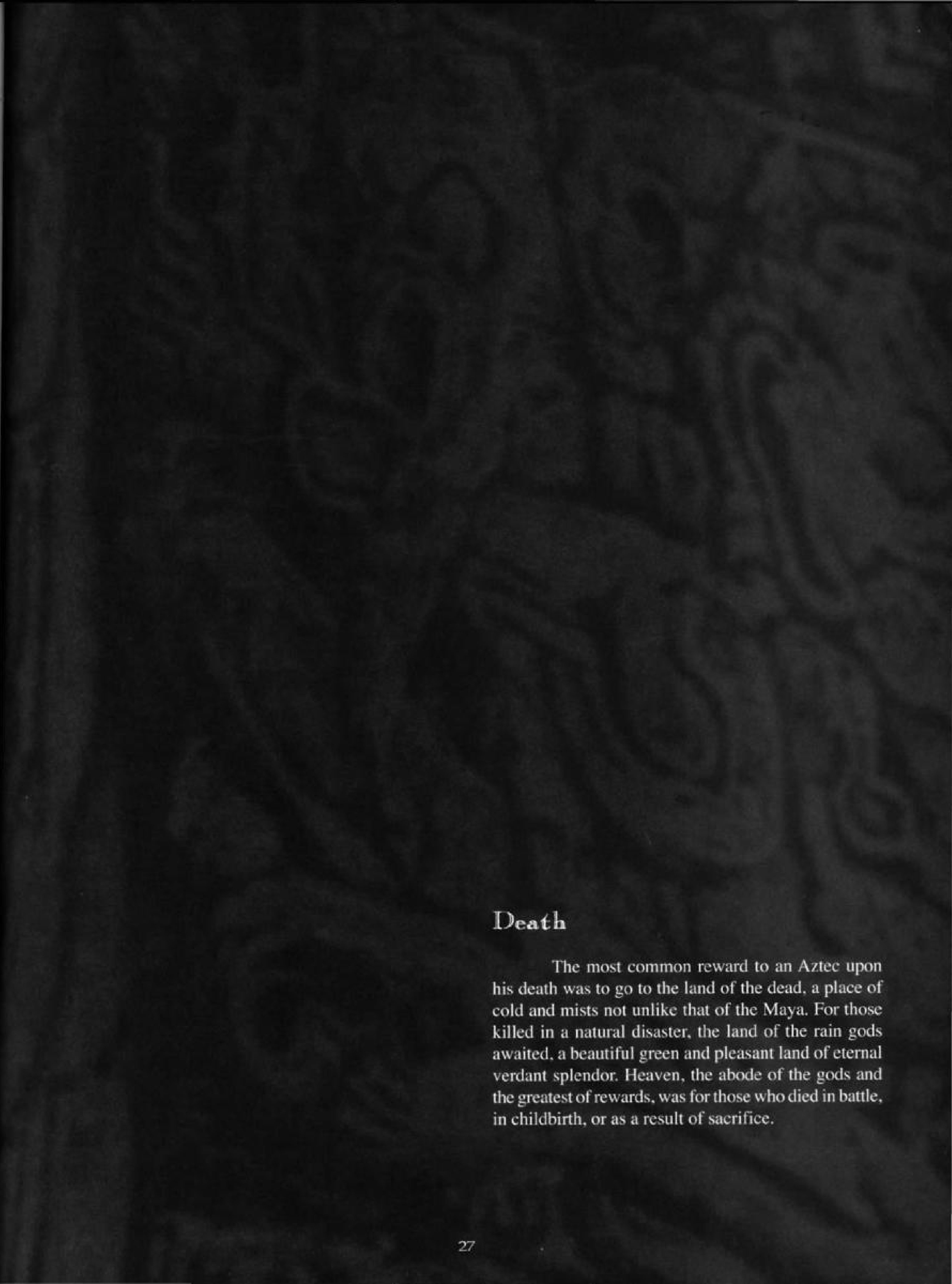
The Aztecs believed that four creations had preceded the current one, each having been destroyed by the gods through various natural calamities. The same fate awaited the current age as well. Different gods had had ascendancy in each creation. During the fifth creation, the ascendant gods were the twin arch-rivals Quetzalcóatl (Plumed Serpent) and Tezcatlipoca (Smoking Mirror).

One tale tells how the twins ordered the universe. Once they spread Tlaltecuhtli, the earth goddess, over creation but they were rough and hurt her. The two gods transformed into serpents and tore her in two. One half became the earth, the other half returned to heaven and brought forth the various planets and some eight hundred gods.

These other gods came to earth to comfort the mother and dictated that all growing things would come from her to provide for the future human race. Quetzalcóatl was to create humans from the rotting bodies of the earlier creation. But Tlaltecuhtli writhed and screamed for blood and bodies to be given to her for her sacrifice in ordering the heavens.

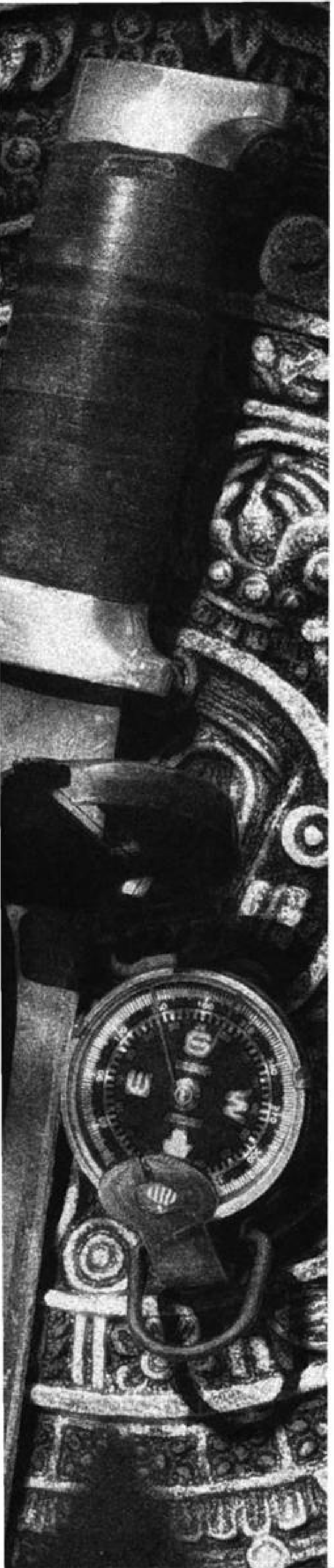
All the gods contested for the privilege of being the sun god. Each threw himself upon the sacrificial flames, the purity of the fire would judge. The victor was a poor, weak young godling, wart-covered and pustule-ridden. He too required blood sacrifice to aid him in his daily journey across the sky. If the tithe of sacrifice were halted, so too would his course. Then the sun would destroy itself from its own heat.

Without the sacrifice of human blood, life, and hearts, the sun and the other celestial bodies would destroy themselves and the humans who lived below them. To die in sacrifice to the sun was to die an honorable and glorious death. Sacrifices were respected and well treated, sometimes even envied for the role they were to play. When the time of sacrifice arrived, victims were led up the steps of the pyramid, where priests would hold tightly to their arms and legs. Another priest in a scarlet robe would plunge an obsidian blade into the chest, sever the arteries to the heart and lift the organ free, display it before the sun god, and either cast it to the crowd of worshippers at the foot of



Death

The most common reward to an Aztec upon his death was to go to the land of the dead, a place of cold and mists not unlike that of the Maya. For those killed in a natural disaster, the land of the rain gods awaited, a beautiful green and pleasant land of eternal verdant splendor. Heaven, the abode of the gods and the greatest of rewards, was for those who died in battle, in childbirth, or as a result of sacrifice.



the temple or hurl it into the jaws of the idol atop the pyramid. Blood rained down upon the crowds below who would eat from the corpses cast down from the heights.

The exact extent of cannibalism among the Aztecs is not known. Ritual cannibalism was definitely practiced, but whether the consuming of human flesh was done on non-ceremonial occasions is a matter of scholarly debate. The sacrifice of children was especially important to the Aztecs as it was believed that the tears of children moved the gods to grant rain.

Other methods of sacrifice were also used - decapitation, burning, skinning alive, throwing the victim from a great height, shooting arrows, or crushing the skull with a great stone.

In times of catastrophe or crisis, mass sacrifices of incredible proportions were often carried out to avert doom. In 1486, during the reign of King Azuihotl, approximately twenty thousand prisoners of war and other victims were sacrificed in a single day to celebrate the expansion of the great temple. The stench of death, and the pall of funereal smoke lay over the city for weeks. Disease quickly followed.

Warfare Among the Aztecs

The Aztecs were a martial people. Wars were waged on any pretext. In fact, the empire seemed to jump at the chance to make war, and may have allowed some neighboring states to retain their independence so that they would be suitable and convenient opponents.

All able-bodied men of fighting age were part of the Aztec war-machine. Here the goal of the individual was to take the most captives for later sacrifice. Failing that, he must die honorably in battle. The average soldier wore quilted cotton armor and carried obsidian-edged spears or clubs. Often a feather-decorated shield would be carried in addition.

Among the noble class, or those more dedicated to warfare, military orders of professional warriors were exceedingly popular and may have had rigid entrance requirements. These fighting units were modeled after a particular animal or object, such as those of the eagle, coyote, jaguar, or arrow. Each order fielded men in fighting units, wearing fighting gear worked with the shape of their chosen animal.

During the mid-fifteenth century, several years of drought, frost, and then famine afflicted the empire. The Aztecs took this as a sign of divine disfavor. King Montezuma I sacrificed ten thousand victims and conditions improved dramatically. From then on, the Aztecs began sacrificing as they had never done before. The purpose of warfare became the acquisition of sacrifices. More glory was attached to the capture than to the slaying of an adversary.

Pre-arranged "flower wars" (the flower is a euphemism for the splash of blood on the ground during a sacrifice) became the norm. Two armies would meet to fight and take captives. When the necessary sacrifices were held by each side, the "war" would end by mutual consent.

Power and Influence - Aztec Style

By the time of the Spanish conquest, the Aztecs controlled most of central Mexico. The Tlaxcalans and the Tarascans however, were able to remain independent. One factor in the continued independence of at least the Tarascans was their recent discovery of the secret of making bronze.

Peoples conquered by the Aztecs would be required to provide a large number of sacrifices immediately after their defeat. Then, the former leader of the new conquest would be reinstated in charge, a tribute schedule would be arranged, and the politics of the conquered state would be only loosely controlled. This way the Aztecs could invariably manufacture reasons for frequent punitive attacks for more sacrifices.

Socially, Aztec culture was arranged in a loose caste system. Slaves, in Nahuatl, "tlacotli," were at the bottom of the social pyramid, but the lot of most slaves was reasonably good. Children of slaves were born free and slaves could win or purchase their own freedom. The commoners, called "macehuali," farmed their own land or the communal land of their clan. The nobles, known as the "pipiltin," lived off the land they owned and the produce that their slaves and inhabiting commoners generated.

Other methods of sacrifice were also used - decapitation, burning, skinning alive, throwing the victim from a great height, shooting arrows, or crushing the skull with a great stone.

Outside of this system were the professional warriors - who were rewarded with their own land. There was also the "pochteca," a hereditary caste of armed merchants who traveled and traded in foreign territory, often acting as spies and "agents-provocateurs" for the king.

The king was considered semi-divine and a representative of the gods. In fact the Nahuatl word for the king, "tlatoani," meant "speaker." His authority over his people was total in regards to foreign policy, diplomacy, command of the army, collecting tribute, and in warfare. All who appeared before him had to do so in rags, barefoot and scraping. The king, in contrast, was surrounded by feathers, jewels, trained animals, and constant entertainment. Government officials were appointed, and removed, at the whim of the monarch. Through them his authority extended beyond his immediate presence.

Law enforcement was strict, with the most common punishments death by stoning, hanging, burial alive, or drowning. There were no jails or prisons, only cages for those awaiting death. Crime to the Aztecs involved breaking one of the many traditions of acceptable behavior, or demonstrating a lack of appropriate discipline. Crimes against religion were the most heinous; robbing a temple perhaps the worst crime imaginable. Murder was not considered as awful as the breach of a tradition. Punishment was not decreed from on high, rather it was demanded by public consensus.

The Aztec Calendar

Discovered in Mexico City in 1790, a twenty ton black stone disc stood before the Temple of the Sun. Inscribed upon it was the calendar which had two functions. Though it undoubtedly ordered the time and world of the Aztecs, it also served as the surface of an altar for human sacrifice. It was buried in 1560 by the Archbishop of Mexico who feared that the calendar stone would inhibit his attempts to convert the Aztecs. Though not as advanced as the Mayan calendar system, the Aztec priests used it to carry out detailed observations of the heavens.

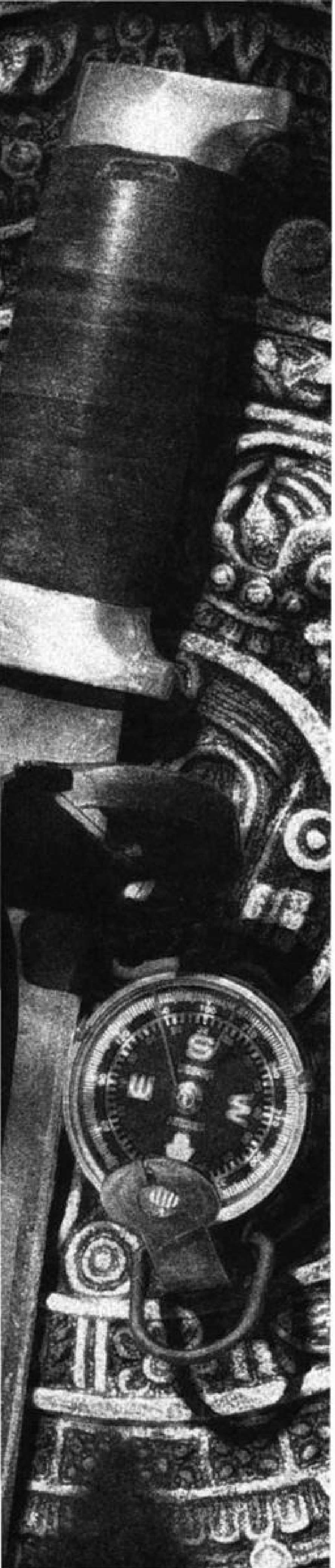
Each of the 360 days of the year was full of superstitions and ritual interpretations of the world. The year was based on the sun's relationship to the earth. Eighteen months of twenty days, plus five unlucky days, made up the year. Fifty-two years made up a cycle. The change of one cycle to the next was a time of great cosmic tension to the Aztecs. It was a dangerous time, where dire catastrophes were to be expected. All fires would be extinguished so as to not take power from the weary and beleaguered sun.

The Ages of the Aztec World

This understanding of the Ages comes from the sixteenth century "Annals of Cuauhtitlan." Each age of the world had its own sun, which was destroyed at the end of the age.

> *"4 Water is the day sign of the first sun that there was in the beginning. Its name was Water Sun. All those who were created in its time were swept away by water. All the people turned into dragonfly nymphs and fish.*

> *"4 Jaguar is the day sign of the second sun that there was, called Jaguar Sun. It happened that the sky collapsed then and the sun did not continue. It happened at*



> *midday. Then there was darkness, and while it was dark, the people were eaten by jaguars. And giants were alive in the time of the one, and the old people say that their greeting was, "Don't fall!", because whoever fell, would fall for good.*
>
> *"4 Rain is the day sign of the third sun that there was called Rain Sun. In the time of this one it happened that fire rained down, so that those who were there were burned. Also gravel rained down. They say that the gravel we find was strewn at that time. Also the lava boiled, and the various rocks that are red were deposited then.*
>
> *"4 Wind is the day sign of the fourth sun, the Wind Sun. In its time people were blown away by the wind, people were turned into monkeys. Those who remained, the monkey people, were scattered in the forest.*
>
> *"4 Movement is the day sign of the fifth sun, called Movement Sun because it moves along and follows its course. And from what the old people say, there will be earthquakes it its time, and famine, and because of this we will be destroyed.."*

Another document, "The Legend of the Suns," records the length of the Sun's reign. Written in 1558, it tells that the world was, at that time 2513 years old. The Water Sun lasted thirteen cycles of 52 years, or 676 years. Jaguar Sun lasted seven cycles. Rain Sun was destroyed after only six cycles. Wind Sun reigned for thirteen cycles. According to this scheme, the present Sun, Movement Sun, began 2028 years after the beginning of the world. At the time that the manuscript was made, 22 May 1558, Movement Sun was 485 years old. This would place the beginning of the age of Movement Sun very near in time to the destruction of the city of Tula, home of the Toltecs.

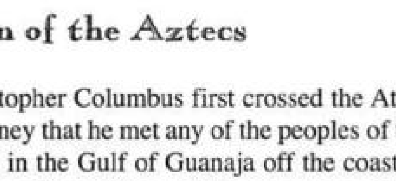
The Old World and the New World

The Destruction of the Aztecs

Although Christopher Columbus first crossed the Atlantic in 1492, it was not until his fourth such journey that he met any of the peoples of the continental Americas. In 1502, while anchored in the Gulf of Guanaja off the coast of Honduras, Columbus fleet was approached by a Maya king and his entourage, who had been on a trading expedition to the islands.

Unsure even what the strange crafts were, the king's party approached the fleet and were invited aboard. Though no common language was known, gift exchanges were made and the two parties traded goods before the king departed.

The next significant contact between Europeans and Mesoamericans occurred a decade later. In 1511, a shipwreck deposited a pitiful group of Spanish survivors among the Maya. After thirteen days in an open boat with little water or food, they were in wretched condition when they were found. The good fortune of their rescue was short-lived, for the Maya were grateful for these unusual sacrifices delivered into their midst and quickly began to offer them to the gods. Over half of the sailors were immediately sacrificed on the altars of the Maya, while the others were held until the next ceremony. Only two of the original survivors escaped the attentions of the obsidian knives of the Maya. One became the slave of a chief. The other became a warleader, married among



the Maya, and was accepted by the natives as one of their own. This man, Jeronimo de Aguilar, would be a great help to the most infamous Spaniard in Mesoamerican history, Hernán Cortés.

Cortés set out from Spain with eleven ships, five hundred and eight men and six horses. He made landfall at Cozumel, where he met the two survivors of the shipwreck several years earlier. Influenced by his conversations with de Aguilar, he sailed north out of Maya territory and into Mexico. In 1519, he landed and set his ships aflame to discourage desertion. In less than two years, the Aztec power was crushed and Spain ruled in Tenochtitlan.

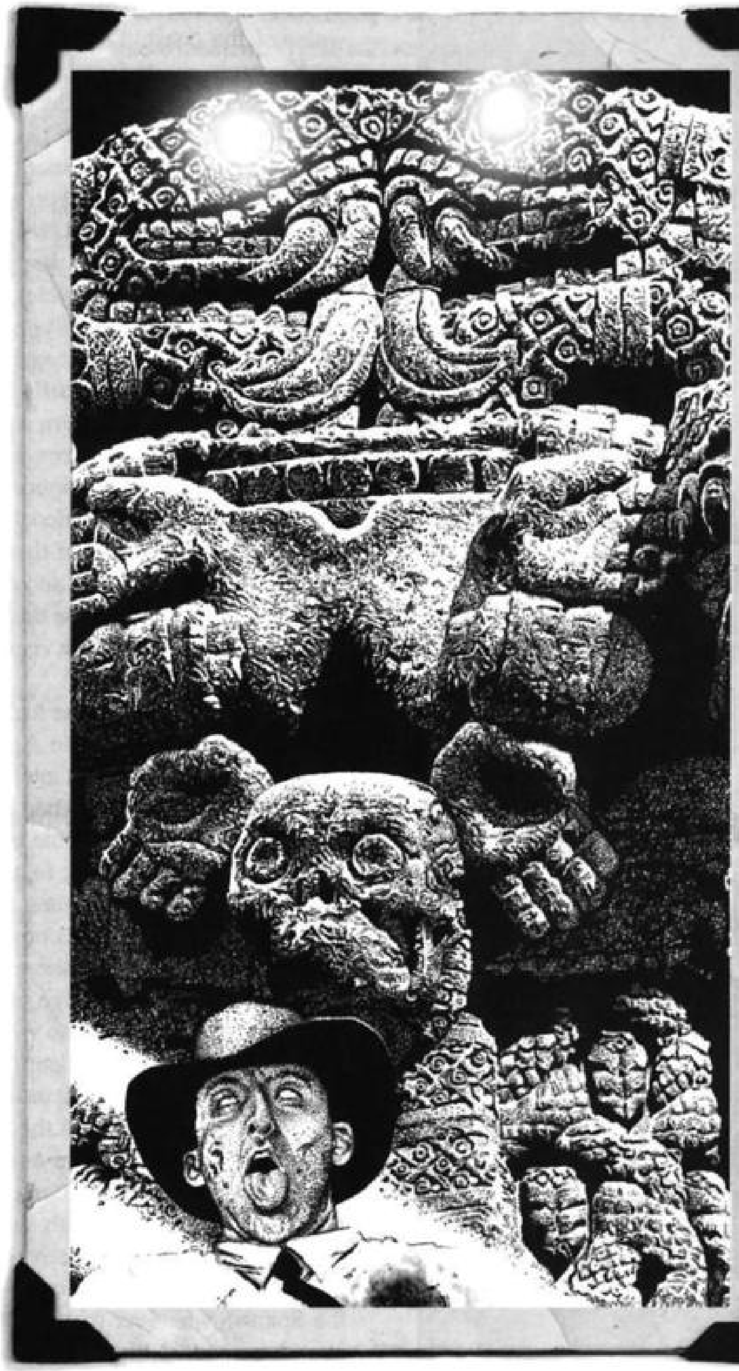
The rapid destruction of the Aztec Empire at the hands of the tiny band of invaders can only be understood if the context in which the Aztecs placed Cortés and his conquistadors is known.

For the Aztecs, as for all the other Mesoamerican peoples, the world was theirs only so long as the gods were satisfied and strong. If the gods weakened or grew angry, dire consequences fell upon the humans who were their servants. Thus, sacrifices must be prompt and numerous in order to please the gods, but also in order that the gods might continue to have the necessary strength to preserve existence. In such an understanding of the world, natural disasters such as earthquake, volcanic eruption, drought, or plague were physical manifestations that demonstrated that humans were not providing well enough for the gods. These and other, less cataclysmic events such as astronomical phenomena, were terrifying signs of future disasters of even greater magnitude.

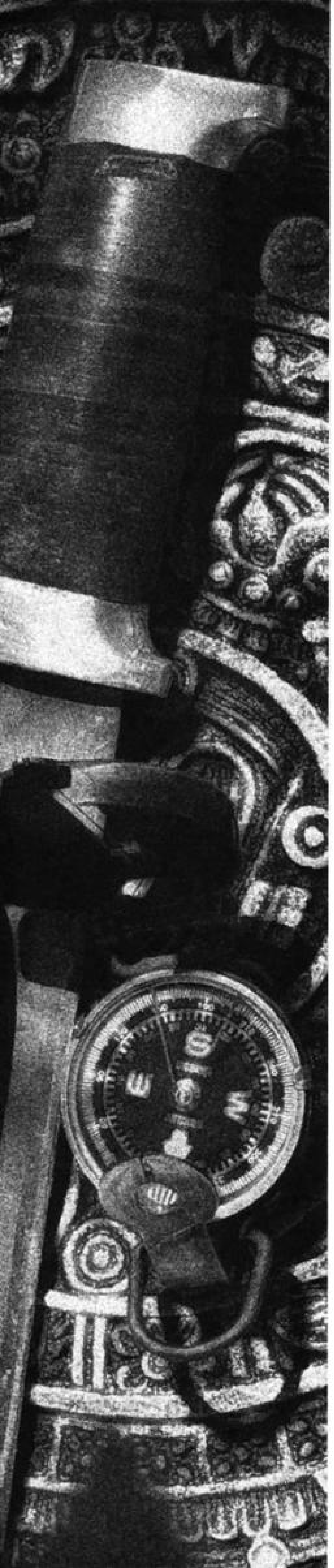
For a more than a decade prior to the appearance of Cortés in Mexico, events in the Aztec world seemed to portend disaster. In 1506, a solar eclipse occurred. To the Aztecs, this was a sure sign of the weakening of the sun. Shortly thereafter, an earthquake of great power shook Mexico. Then in 1509, a huge and terrifying fire in the sky, a comet, appeared. Even the least panic-prone among the Aztecs began to suspect that the cosmos was threatened.

Not long after the appearance of the comet, the Great Pyramid of Tenochtitlan was severely damaged in a great fire of mysterious origin. More earthquakes followed in 1512. That winter, snow fell in Tenochtitlan, an extremely rare occurrence. People panicked in huge numbers. More sightings of comets and lightning bolts were reported. The end of the world was foreseen by populace and priest alike.

All of these events deeply disturbed Montezuma II, the current king of the Aztecs, who began to have chilling visions and dreams. Two-headed men, who vanished as soon as they were seen, stalked his waking life. In dreams he saw a weeping woman with no flesh on her face. Another vision was inspired when two fishermen brought him a crane trapped in their nets. The trapping of a crane was held to be a terrible portent of the future, so when two peasants caught one inadvertently they insisted that Montezuma be shown, in case he could act to avert the doom. When Montezuma saw the crane, he had a vision of a black, smoking mirror set in the head of a crane-like bird. In this mirror, Montezuma saw strange men riding hornless deer. When the priests could not confirm his visions, the king suspected them of duplicity and had their wives and children killed.



The terror and madness that descended on the king was rapidly sensed by the people of Tenochtitlan. Fatalism and fear were rampant. Armies were dispatched to collect fresh sacrifices and tribute. Taxes were increased, especially in the form of sacrifices. A new sacrificial stone was crafted and drenched in a continual stream of blood.



Then an old man brought word to Montezuma of a mountain that moved on the water of the coast. The king sent a party to investigate. They returned with tales of strange, ugly, white-faced, short-haired men with beards who sat in a winged house on the water. These men fought with gray weapons, harder than obsidian, rode on hornless deer, and slaughtered many. Instead of whistling when they attacked, they shouted, and they took no prisoners for sacrifice. Further, they demanded that all sacrifices be stopped and claimed that their one god was to be the one to which the Aztecs must pray. No blood was to be given to the idol, only flowers, laid at the feet of the man on the cross.

This was 1518, a year which coincided with the end of one of the fifty-two year periods which were the cycles of the world, an inauspicious time for anything in any circumstance. In the apocalyptic mania which gripped both Montezuma and his people, it could only indicate inescapable fate. Added to this, the current year was the anniversary of the god Quetzalcóatl's birth and the prophesied year that he would return to his people from over the eastern sea.

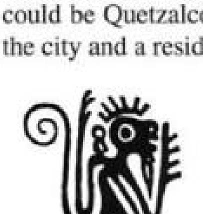
Montezuma determined that the arrival of the Spanish must be related to the prophecy of the return of the bearded, white-skinned god Quetzalcóatl, who had vanished many centuries earlier. The leader of these visitors was described as being similar in appearance and dress to Quetzalcóatl. The king decided there was only one thing that could be done. He commissioned fine gifts for the visitors and prepared for the arrival of the Feathered Serpent.

On Cortés part, he had been adequately supplied with detailed information on the Aztecs by Jeronimo de Aguilar, but he was even more fortunate to take into his company a woman of great intelligence, beauty, and hatred toward Tenochtitlan. Malinche was an Aztec woman who had been given in marriage to one of the eastern Maya tribes with whom Cortés first came into contact. Bitter at her exile from the city of her birth, she was more than willing to aid the Spanish in its destruction. She was fluent in both Mayan and the Aztec tongues, and proved to be a repository of information on the customs, beliefs, and religious observances of the Aztecs. She also served as translator for the intruders. Eventually, she was Cortés lover and bore a son by him. Certainly she was a great source of knowledge of the superstitions of her former people and contributed overwhelmingly in the ease with which Cortés was able to play upon the mistaken assumptions regarding his identity.

As the Aztec emissaries from Montezuma were returning to their master from the coast, Cortés met with the Tabascans, enemies of the Aztecs. They had peacefully traded with a Spanish ship only the year before and Cortés hoped that the Tabascans might prove allies in Mesoamerica. This time the Tabascans attacked. Only the horses and cannons of the Spanish saved them from utter destruction. These were perceived with such terror by the natives that they turned the battle against the vastly superior number of Tabascan warriors. Word of these fantastic and terrifying weapons preceded the Spanish wherever they went from then on, eventually travelling to the court of the already panicked Montezuma. Great gifts were sent out to meet the advancing Spaniards, arousing their greed as their observance of the sacrifices of the natives had inflamed their religious indignation.

As Cortés approached Tenochtitlan, he began to notice that many of the subchiefs and peoples subject to the Aztecs were dissatisfied with their conquerors. At one stop, the Totonacs, also unhappy with Aztec rule were sacrificing a large number of captives. Enraged by this display, Cortés and his men upended the idols, cleansed the altars, and demanded that the Totonacs accept Christianity, which the awed natives did. Cortés then came to the Tlaxcalans, also independent of the Aztecs and hostile and suspicious of everyone else. The initial attack upon the Spanish was frighteningly effective, but the Spanish rallied and drove the Tlaxcalans off. A parley resulted in an alliance against the Aztecs.

When the Spaniards arrived at Tenochtitlan, Montezuma awaited them. Carried on a palanquin decorated with green feathers, gold, silver, and pearls, beautiful tapestries were spread out before him. Cortés was presented with necklaces of gold, as were his soldiers. This love of gold was disconcerting to the Aztecs, who believed the metal was the excrement of the gods, but they were cautious lest they anger one who could be Quetzalcóatl. They welcomed the intruders into the city and a residence was prepared in the palace itself.



Surrounded by over one hundred thousand warriors, Cortés was determined to be on constant guard. When allowed to climb the Great Pyramid, they were greeted by the fresh hearts of several sacrifices, a rack of flensed human skulls, and a group of dancing, blood-covered priests. It was easy for the Spanish to imagine their eventual fate if they made any misstep. The morale of the Europeans, already slipping due to being surrounded by nearly a quarter of a million of what they thought of as demon-inspired barbarians, plummeted.

In an effort to raise morale among his own people as well as improve his situation, Cortés took Montezuma prisoner, amassing a fortune in "gifts" while he held the king prisoner. In the center of Tenochtitlan, Montezuma was held hostage in royal splendor by the vastly outnumbered Spanish, themselves prisoners of the increasingly suspicious inhabitants of the city.

That winter, Cortés left the capital to repulse an attack by his countrymen. The governor of Cuba, convinced that Cortés was becoming too powerful had issued orders for his arrest. The Cuban force carried with it something that was far more devastating than a few cannon or horses however - small pox. In the next few years the disease would claim hundreds of thousands of lives in the capital and beyond, eventually spreading beyond Mesoamerica in a North American plague that easily rivals the toll of the Black Death of medieval Europe.

In Cortés' absence, a misunderstanding led to the massacre of several Aztecs by some the Spaniards left behind. This finally provoked all-out attack by the citizens of Tenochtitlan. Upon his return, the victorious Cortés was attacked by wave after wave of Aztecs who attempted to storm the palace in order to save their king. In the narrow confines and passageways of the palace, the Spanish cannons and handguns repelled the assaults time and again, slaughtering warriors by the thousands.

When allowed to climb the Great Pyramid, they were greeted by the fresh hearts of several sacrifices, a rack of flensed human skulls, and a group of dancing, blood-covered priests.

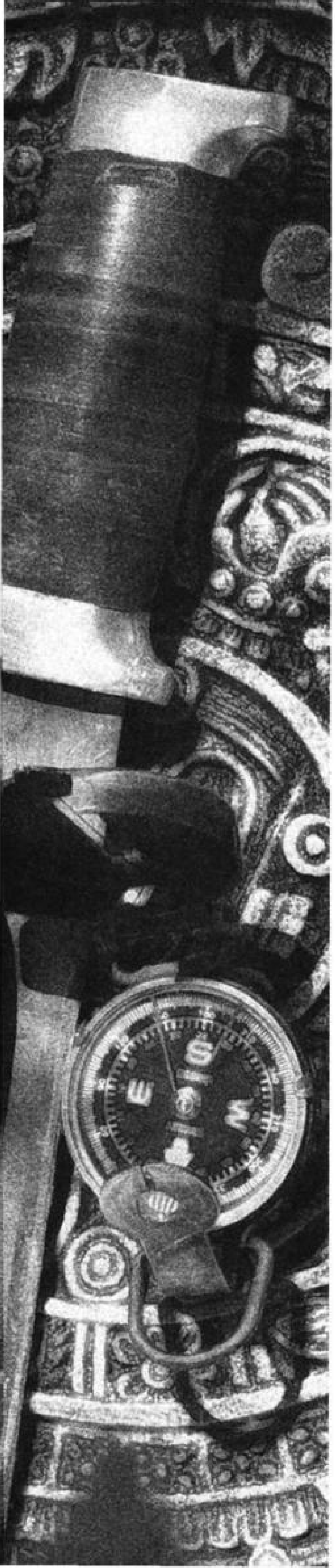
Finally Cortés convinced Montezuma to appeal to his people. But the King's prestige had suffered during his confinement. While still respected by many, others felt he was a traitor to the Aztecs. A rock thrown during his appeal struck him in the head. He lay unconscious for four days before he died. Whether he died of his wound is unknown. Some sources record that he committed suicide, while others claim that he was murdered by his captors.

In a counterattack, the Spanish managed to sack the Great Temple and cast down the idol. However, when Cortés attempted to address the Aztecs, he was hooted down. The Spaniards were at bay in the fortress-like palace, unable to escape the populace outside it. Food, ammunition, and gunpowder were all in short supply. Before long, the Aztec attack would succeed. To further the straits of the besieged, the Aztecs had thrown down the bridges that linked the island city to the mainland.

Desperate, Cortés took his failing army and attempted to escape using a portable bridge. The Spanish were detected and attacked. The bridge collapsed. Many of the Spaniards, weighed down by their gold and silver, drowned. Others were taken captive and sacrificed. Only a dispirited and bedraggled remnant, including Cortés, escaped. All of the cannons, most of the horses, and nearly four hundred and fifty Spanish were lost. Cortés fled to Tlaxcala to recuperate.

With the help of the Tlaxacalans and nearly one thousand Spanish reinforcements, Cortés spent the next year subjugating virtually every people that had been under Aztec rule. Tribute and grain to Tenochtitlan was halved. Then he had a fleet of thirteen light warships brought overland to the shores of Lake Texcoco. The city of Tenochtitlan was under attack by ships that were immune to the effort of the canoes sent out against them. Seventy-five days of fighting ensued, during which small pox ravaged the city. Yet twice the Aztecs had the opportunity to kill Cortés in the fighting and they refrained. It was the way of all Mesoamerican warfare to capture the enemy for later sacrifice. The sacrifice of so great a threat as Cortés was too much to resist. Instead of striking the final blow, attempts were made to take him prisoner and he fought his way clear.

Gradually, the Aztecs succumbed to disease, famine, and cannon fire. The Spanish moved methodically through the city, razing it street by street, building by building. After desperate fighting, the Great Temple was taken as well. Every surviving Spaniard was wounded. The rubble



strewn streets were burned. Nearly a quarter of a million Aztecs are estimated to have died during the siege of Tenochtitlan.

The last Aztec king, Cuauhtemoc, surrendered on 13 August 1521. He was tortured in vain for the location of a fortune in gold hidden somewhere in or near the palace according to legend. Later he was hanged by Cortés, who became Governor and Captain-General for the Spanish crown. Tenochtitlan was leveled, a Spanish city, Mexico City, raised in its place. There Cortés lived until his recall in 1529. He died in Spain in 1547.

A large hoard of Roman jewelry was found near Mexico City in 1961. Earlier, a beach in Venezuala turned up a ceramic jar with coins of Roman manufacture, dating from the reign of Augustus (31 B.C.E. to 14 C.E.) to Constans (337 to 350 C.E.).

The Fall of the Maya

While it took only two desperate and bloody years to bring about the collapse of the Aztec Empire, it would take over two decades for the Spanish to conquer the many independent kingdoms of the Maya lords.

Cortés' deputy, Pedro de Alvarado, was sent to expand the newly conquered Spanish domain southward in 1523. He and his force of one hundred and twenty cavalry and two hundred foot-soldiers, accompanied by hundreds of Mexican auxiliaries, took two months to reach the highlands of what came to be Guatemala. The Spanish travelled among the many Maya tribes, demanding the allegiance of each in turn. By 1534, Alvarado had allied with several of the independent tribes. Many battles, many Spanish and Maya dead, and many years later, the greatest of the kings that made up the main political entity of the north Yucatán, Tutul Xice, accepted Christianity. With Tutul Xice subjected to Spanish rule, many of the other lords and cities followed, as each was compelled by the Spanish in turn. Within a few years all of the chiefs of the western half of the peninsula had done as had the great Tutul Xice. The eastern provinces, traditionally the more difficult to compel due to the terrain, required several more months and many battles to quell. By 1541, the last of the independent Maya were under Spanish rule, however weakly. Rebellions continued to occur regularly, each eventually resulting in the subjugation of the natives once more.

The natives of the south did not escape the ravages of the Spaniards greatest military ally - small pox. Large numbers of natives, possibly entire tribes, were wiped out by plague, or weakness caused by it. The Spanish too suffered from sickness, but the immunity acquired by long contact with the disease kept them from feeling its worst effects. The people indigenous to Mesoamerica had no immunity to it.

Mesoamerica After the Conquest

Guatemala soon became the political and economic center of Spanish Central America, a position it retained for nearly three centuries. Colonial grandees, conquistadors and their wives, and churchmen were granted "encomiendas" - royal grants enabling their holders - called "encomienderos" - to command entire native towns to do seasonal work on local Spanish estates as a labor tax.

The church eagerly worked among the servile natives, attempting to organize them into the church-controlled "congregaciones." From these "congregaciones" the churchmen chose Indian elders and formed them into "confradia," local governing committees that were supposed to convince the rest of the population of the benefits of the Catholic faith.

There were repeated rebellions among the Maya, with the rebels often retaining long term control of the highlands (a situation which continued into the 20th century).

Utatlan - now Cumarcaj - was the pre-conquest capital of the Quiche (pronounced "kee-shay") Maya . It was surrounded by deep canyons and approachable only by a steep stair and a narrow causeway. Utatlan was inhabited by the nobles and priests of the royal court. Outside the fortress were the dwellings of the common people.

In 1524, Tecun Uman, a Quiche ruler, was slain in single combat by Pedro de Alvarado several miles from Utatlan. The Quiche invited Alvarado and his men to Utatlan, intending to burn them alive as sacrifices. But Alvarado heard of the plot and instead slew the Quiche nobility and razed the city. Little remains of Utatlan now. However, a series of tunnels exists that crisscross beneath what was ancient Utatlan. The entrance is to the north of the city itself. The tunnel is twelve feet in height and well finished. After about one hundred yards the passage divides left and right. To the right the tunnel ends in a deep shaft with another tunnel at its bottom. This is said to go for several miles, under a river, to the nearby fortress of Paismachi.

But much of the Indian resistance was cultural, taking Spanish introduced items or concepts and twisting them to the Mayan purpose. The chicken, introduced by the Spanish, was made a sacrificial animal, much to the horror of the church. Spanish Catholic saints were adopted as new incarnations of traditional Mayan deities. The "confradias" rapidly transformed their mandate from supporting the church of the conquerors to the promotion of a strange cult centered around an Indian named Maximon - a Mayan-Christian, pipe-smoking, moonshine-drinking saint.

After major rebellions in 1760 and 1764, King Charles III of Spain dispatched Archbishop Pedro Cortés y Larraz to Mesoamerica to assess the situation. He reported a divided and hate-filled society composed of a minority of urban Spaniards amid the majority of rural or servile Indians.

The Formation of Central America

The situation was impossible to save, although several times Spain attempted to exert total control over the region. Finally, in 1820, Central America gained its independence from Spain. However, this did little to change the lives of the majority of the people living there. The primarily Spanish-descended "Ladino" elite cut the court of Spain out of Central American affairs and freed themselves to administer the land as a whole. The change only increased the degree of control they had over what was very nearly a caste system.

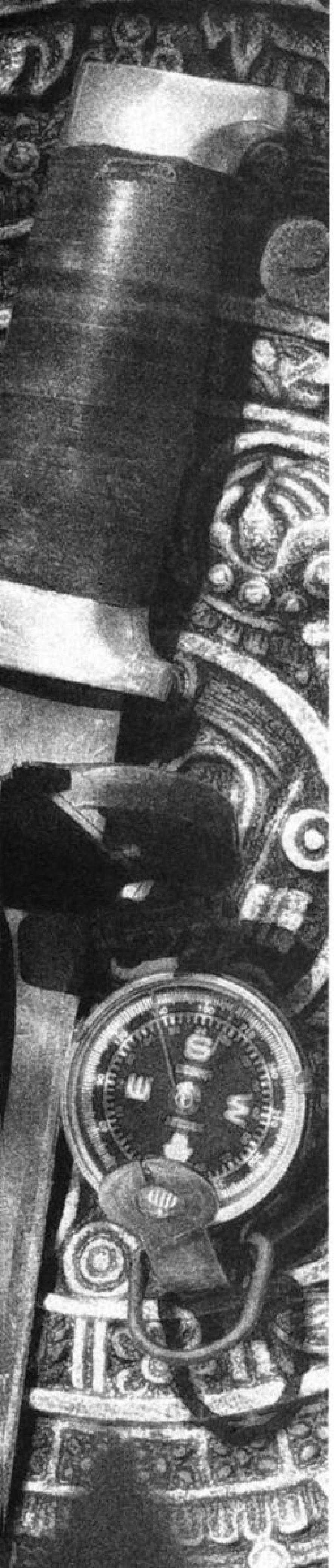
Newly independent Mexico attempted to establish its own colonial holdings by invading the south. But its armies were repulsed by a confederation of the other Central American ex-colonies, who joined forces to establish the United Provinces of Central America. With its capital in Guatemala City, all of Central America (but not Mexico) was brought together politically for a short time under the auspices of this Union. But it was still an essentially "Ladino" republic, with little to offer the native majority of the population.

Mexico

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Catholic church had amassed huge amounts of wealth in the form of land and portable goods and had become frequent lenders to the growing entrepreneurial class. But while the predominantly Ladino entrepreneurs were bettering their station, the growing and increasingly poor mestizo population (Mexican born residents of mixed Spanish and Native ancestry) were treated as second class citizens at best.

Afraid of the growing power of the church, King Charles III of Spain decreed in 1804 that all church funds be turned over to the crown. As clergy all over Mexico were forced to comply with the order, calling in large sums of money lent to entrepreneurs, economic upheaval followed. Mexican's blamed their state on the remote ruler across the Atlantic. When Napoleon invaded Spain in 1808 and captured the full attention of the Spanish crown, the Mexican clergy planned a revolt.

Mexican independence began on 16 September 1810, celebrated since by a holiday. Padre Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla issued a call for independence known as the "Grito de Dolores," in the province of Guanajuato. Though the rebels who supported him soon captured several cities and extended their influence steadily, it was another eleven years before Spanish rule was driven out entirely. In this time Hidalgo was captured and executed. Another padre took his place and the revolution continued until Mexico City fell to the rebels in 1821.



The "Plan de Iguala" treaty of this year, concluded between Spain and the newly free country, guaranteed the dominance of the Catholic Church, the continuance of the already instituted constitutional monarchy, and equal rights for mestizos as well as Mexican-born Spaniards. Former Viceroy Agustin de Iturbide was appointed Emperor of the new republic. His rule lasted only two years before another revolution established the United States of Mexico in 1824. Under this administration, the former twenty-two provinces of Mexico under the Spanish were divided into nineteen states and four territories. Another turbulent decade, in which two more coups were attempted and all non-Dominican monasteries were secularized, delivered republican Mexico firmly into the hands of an emperor.

The troops of the King of Spain were slow to leave Mexico, eventually needing to be expelled by the new national army. The General in charge of the expulsion, Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, used the opportunity to seize control first of the military, then of the country as a whole. He revoked the Constitution of 1824 and led Mexico unwillingly into a war with the United States. Mexicans everywhere were angry at the self-appointed dictator who threw out the Constitution of the Republic. But the American settlers who had moved from the north to take Mexican citizenship in the northern part of Coahuilo y Texas were also angry. In 1836 the "Texicans" declared independence for the Republic of Texas, fought and lost at the famous battle of the Alamo, but eventually routed Santa Anna's defending forces at San Jacinto, Texas.

Defeated and captured, Santa Anna was pressed into signing the Velasco Agreement which guaranteed Texas independence and recognized the Rio Grande as the border between Mexico and the new Texan state. So matters stood until 1845, when the United States granted statehood to a nearly bankrupt Texas. Santa Anna's administration took the opportunity to claim that it had never recognized the Rio Grande as its border with Texas, instead stating that Texas only extended as far south as the Nueces River - about one hundred miles further north. Santa Anna further claimed that Texas has only been granted independence on the provision that it never be annexed into the United States. American troops soon moved in to hold the area south of the Nueces River. Santa Anna responded by sending forces across the Rio Grande. The Mexican-American War had begun.

The war was disastrous for Mexico. Mexico City fell to U.S. troops in 1848, and Santa Anna was forced to sign the Treaty of Guadeloupe Hidalgo. Therein, Mexico conceded the Rio Grande-Nueces River area, as well the territories of Nuevo Mexico and Alta California - together, these territories include the modern day states of Colorado, New Mexico, Nevada, Arizona, California, and parts of Utah. So devastated was the Mexican economy from the war that in 1853, Santa Anna sold southern Arizona and a section of New Mexico's Mesilla Valley to the U.S. for ten million dollars. In total, Mexico lost fifty-one percent of its territory as a result of the war. This final loss of territory was enough to convince the Mexican people to remove Santa Anna from office. In 1855, populist Benito Juarez took power.

The second half of the century was even more chaotic for Mexico than the first had been. After the removal of Santa Anna, civil war erupted in 1858, with self-appointed governments in Mexico City and Veracruz vying for national authority. As it had been in the past, church wealth was the principal issue. Juarez had brought in a new constitution in 1857 and passed laws restricting the financial powers of the Church. All church property other than church buildings had to be sold or otherwise relinquished. A pro-church faction seized control of Mexico City. Fighting continued until 1861, when Juarez was elected president.

His first task was to deal with the 1862 French invasion of Mexico, which came as a result of the non-payment by Mexico of a sizable debt to France. The following year, France captured Mexico City and installed Austrian Ferdinand Maxmillian as emperor of Mexico. Pressure from the United States was instrumental in forcing France to withdraw. Juarez regained power in 1867. Over the next four years Juarez instituted many economic and educational reforms. Upon his death in 1872, his successor and erstwhile opponent, Porfirio Diaz continued the reform spirit in a more authoritative manner. For the next twenty-eight years either Diaz or his supporters ruled, suspending open elections and constricting the free press, while pushing Mexico through a number of modernization attempts.

By the turn of the century, the gap between rich and poor had widened drastically due to the pro-capitalist policies of the Diaz regime and the lack of any political recourse for the poor. In response, liberal opposition formed in exile in Texas and organized strikes throughout the country. Diaz was forced to call an election to avoid wide scale revolt. But when it appeared that his opponent, Francisco Madero, was gathering too much support, he had him imprisoned on spurious charges.

Upon his release, Madero fled once more to Texas and began to organize the overthrow of the Diaz regime. The rebels, alongside the bandit-revolutionary Pancho Villa and the peasant hero Emiliano Zapata, took control of the Mexican states of Sonora, Chihuahua, and Morelos. Diaz tried but could not contain the revolution and resigned in 1910. Madero was elected president, but his authority was challenged almost immediately as the factions of his former supporters contended for power. Madero crossed the radical Zapatista faction when he refused to restore the land to the peasants in 1911. In 1913, he was executed by reactionary troops commanded by Felix Diaz, nephew to the former president.

The next six years saw the factions moving into and out of favor and power almost month by month. Armed gangs that backed various factions made life dangerous for all they crossed. The United States finally stepped in and lent its support to Constitutional Army Commander Venustiano Carranza, who formed a government in Vera Cruz. In opposition, Pancho Villa set up his presidency in Guanahuato and raided towns on the American side of the border in retaliation for the United States interference. The Americans responded in kind, sending General "Blackjack" Pershing and five thousand U.S. cavalry to capture Villa in the winter of 1916-17. Villa eluded Pershing, but Carranza retained his seat.

Finally, Carranza called a convention which issued the Constitution of 1917. Central to the document was a commitment to return to the peasantry those lands originally owned by them but seized by the ranchers and plantation owners under Diaz. In 1919, Carranza's troops assassinated the revolutionary Zapata. A year later, while fleeing the country with five million pesos in gold, Carranza was captured and executed by Sonoran Army officer Alvaro Obregon. Obregon held power for four turbulent years, bringing significant and long-sighted educational reform. He was followed by another Sonoran, Plutarcho Elias Calles, in 1924. Calles instituted sweeping agrarian reform, redistributing over three million hectares of land to the peasants. He was also crucial to the formation of the National Revolutionary Party, which would come to dominate Mexican politics in later years.

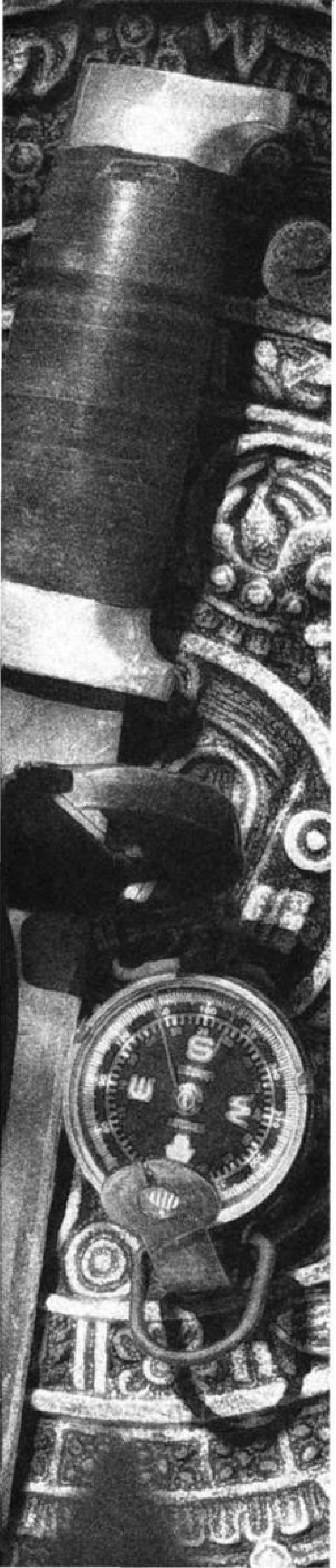
1920 saw the beginning of Prohibition in the United States, and this had a great effect on the northern territories of Mexico. Americans travelled across the border in huge numbers to purchase liquor in the cantinas of its southern neighbor. American money poured into Mexico as fast the liquor went out, spurring the growth of all sorts of enterprises intent upon keeping still greater amounts of U.S. cash from returning across the border with the spent touristas. Brothels and casinos contributed greatly to the economy of cities struggling through decades of revolutionary strife. The wealthy border tourist towns quickly garnered a reputation in the U.S. as centers of corruption, but the influx of foreign capital encouraged local manufacturing, agriculture, and other non-tourist oriented activity. Even after the repeal of Prohibition in 1933, the allure of Tiahuana and the other border towns remained strong. In 1938, gambling was outlawed in Mexico, but did little to halt the flow of Americans each year.

In 1934, Lazaro Cardenas, a mestizo of Tarascan Indian heritage came to the presidency, instituting the most significant social and agrarian changes in the history of Mexico. More than eighteen million hectares of land were more equitably distributed. Foreign-owned interests were expropriated and a national oil company established. Though this frightened away international investors from Mexico, it also provided the country with a more stable economic base than it had previously enjoyed.

Yucatán

Though a part of Mexico, Yucatán is distinct enough from Mexico geographically that its history is better considered separately. Yucatán participated little in the Mexican War of Independence, for example. Though it did join the newly liberated country, the long isolation of the peninsula engendered a strong sense as a distinct society that remains into the present century.

Only a few years after the War of Mexican Independence, the upper classes of Yucatán once again yearned for freedom, this time from Mexico. Courting the idea of a



union with the United States, the landed classes armed their Mayan workers with European weapons and trained them in their use. Made bold by the new power in their grasp, the Maya dreamed of their own emancipation, determining to rebel against the landlords.

The War of the Castes began in 1847 in the repressive city of Valladolid. Here the Maya were forbidden even to stroll the plaza or prominent streets, forced to keep to the outskirts of the city or to its alleys. The rebels quickly took control of the city, indulging in a massacre of many of its wealthier inhabitants. Armed and resupplied by the British in the neighboring British Honduras, the rebellion quickly seized control of much of the peninsula.

Within a year the revolutionaries had driven their former oppressors from most of the Yucatán. Only Mérida and the walled city of Campeche held out. The governor of Mérida was preparing to flee when the attacks faltered then ceased almost entirely. The cause of the respite was mysterious for several days, but finally it was revealed that the revolutionaries had surrendered the field at the sight of the winged ant. Mayan mythology tells that the corn must be sowed at the first appearance of the winged ant or Chac, the rain god will cast drought across the country. The Maya returned to their fields to placate the blood-hungry Chac. The white and mestizo landowners used the time to regroup and seek external aid. Aid came, strangely enough, from the Mexican government that the Yucatecans had been preparing to rebel against only a year earlier.

The counterrevolution against the erstwhile rebels was vicious in the extreme. Between 1848 and 1855 the Indian population of Yucatán was halved. Some Maya fled to the jungles of southern Quintana Roo. There the flagging revolutionary spirit was rekindled by the miracle of the talking cross of Chan Santa Cruz. The cross convinced them that the revolution was not yet lost and the rebels carried on the fight for freedom from the forbidding jungles near the border with British Honduras.

But the main body of the revolution was broken and Yucatán was once more in the hands of the landowners and under the authority of Mexico City. The rebels in Quintana Roo were largely ignored for the rest of the nineteenth century, though they occasionally made forays and guerrilla attacks upon local symbols of power.

Finally, at the turn of the century, Mexican troops armed with modern weapons invaded in force and subdued the region. The Shrine of the Talking Cross was razed, and the town renamed after the Yucatecan governor, Felipe Carillo Puerto. But the region was held only lightly for the next several decades, becoming a territory only in 1936 and being allowed a considerable degree of internal freedom.

Guatemala

Two rival political parties grew up in the shadow of the United Provinces of Central America. The Liberals were primarily members of the emerging commercial classes, in favor of free trade, public education, separation of church and state, social Darwinism, and the integration of Central America into the world beyond. The Conservatives supported the power of the church, protectionist trade regulations, and restricted suffrage.

The Liberals, under Honduran Francisco Morazan, dominated the United provinces from 1830-37, but they lost considerable authority when their free trade policies resulted in British goods flooding the market and destroying much of the local economy. In addition the taxes that the Liberals levied made them uniformly unpopular with the citizens. In 1837, Conservative Rafael Carrera rebelled, supported by his primarily Guatemalan army. After two years, the United Provinces of Central America were no more. In its place stood Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica.

In Guatemala, the Liberals were generally not well liked by the Indians due to the Liberal interest in the confiscation of church and native communal land in an effort to "modernize" Guatemala and Central America as a whole. With the local priests as instigators, many Indians joined Carrera guerrillas in a successful revolt against the Liberals. The Conservatives under Carrera held power for 27 years and treated the Indians little different than had the Liberals before them.

A Mayan Village - Now

Much of the Yucatán, geographically and culturally isolated from the rest of Mesoamerica, is unchanged from the way it was centuries ago before the Spanish conquest. Villages of Maya still live in a style not too different from that of their ancestors, save in matters of religion.

The Yucatán is vast and environmentally diverse, covering over a quarter of a million square miles and ranging from craggy and forbidding mountain ranges with cool and verdant rift valleys, to dense rain forests dotted with swamps and rivers, to dry plains with scattered forest patches in the north.

As they did in ancient times, modern Maya villages live in household compounds oriented around extended families. Each family is comprised of a group of related adults and their dependents, generally ranging over three or more generations. This social unit also provides the necessary members for the labor-intensive farming that has always been the center of Mayan village life, now and centuries ago. Along with providing the necessary labor for farming, the extended family system ensures enough hands for the other necessary activities of the household. Such tasks include the building and refurbishment of houses and storerooms, the preparation of food, clothing and tools, the gathering of firewood, and other specialized crafts such as pottery or weaving.

Households dwell in compounds of single-roomed houses constructed of wooden poles and lime plaster, roofed with palm thatch, reeds, or other readily available material. The individual dwellings are arranged around an open courtyard or patio which provides a gathering place and a degree of privacy for the household's members. Many households have a separate kitchen building as well as a separate storeroom for tools, foodstuffs, and other supplies.

Traditional roles and the types of labor done are gender-based. Men are the farmers who hold the majority of the village authority. Women prepare the food and are experts at the many crafts of the household. They also wield a great deal of tacit authority, especially within the household.

In the Maya highlands, the most important position of authority is that of the cargo official, adult men who take on the cargo, or burden, of responsibility for organizing the festivals of the saints throughout the year. In many highland villages either the cargo official or a co-official is also responsible for settling disputes over loans, damaged property, or sexual misconduct and other cultural infractions. Cargo positions are highly sought, prestigious positions for which men may strive for years. Yet the position also entails great expense, since the official must pay for the many festivals and ritual meals, flowers and incense, and other paraphernalia used in their duties. They must also live within the village proper, possibly away from their own households. The cargo officials are regarded as saints themselves for the duration of their tenure, and this confers great respect and authority upon the office. The resemblance between the cargo official and the kings and nobles, or village headman of the ancient Maya is very real.

Shamans are still an integral part of modern Mayan life, bridging the divide between Mesoamerican Christianity and the far older beliefs held by the Maya prior to the Spanish conquest. The shamans were and are the repositories of stories, legends, and customs of generations of village experience. The power of the shaman is personal, intimate, and spiritual. They are the interpreters of a complex and internally rational world view, in the form of local history and mythology. They are also the healers of both the body and the community, treating disease simultaneously as an emotional, social, physical, and spiritual malady. The shaman lives within two worlds, the physical world of the village, but also the world of ecstatic experience; a world that, to the Maya, is as real and as complex as the one of our common understanding.

Finally in 1871, the Liberals managed, with financial support from President Benito Juarez of Mexico, to take the capital back from their adversaries in a military coup. General Justo Rufino Barrios, a coffee plantation owner held power from 1873-79, and instituted policies which dominated Guatemala for decades to follow. Dispossessed Indians were forced into work crews, poorly paid and kept, to labor on the roads, canals, bridges, and port facilities deemed necessary by the Liberal administration. Huge tracts of Indian communal land were nationalized into plantations for coffee and other luxury goods, primarily for export to Europe and North America.

The Indians rebelled and a guerrilla war ensued around the town of Memostenanga. General Barrios put the revolt down, burned the crops, and resettled the local population forcibly. This became a common Liberal response to rebellion for decades to follow. The next sixty years saw Liberal "modernization" at the expense of the indigenous communal lands, repeated rebellions, and government reprisals. Economic control of the country resided in the hands of a small, wealthy group of landowning, commercial families. Foreign companies were given generous concessions; opponents of the government were censored, imprisoned, or exiled by the active and extensive police force.

From 1898 until 1920, Manuel Estrada Cabrera ruled Guatemala with a tyrannical style that has become stereotypical of Central American dictatorships since. Styling himself the "Teacher and Protector of Guatemalan Youth", and his country a "Tropical Athens", he instituted lavish festivals and temples in honor of the Minerva, Ro-

man goddess of wisdom, invention, and prosperity. He fancied himself a bringer of culture and wealth to a troubled land, but he systematically raped the treasury, ignored public education and spent wildly on the armed forces. In 1920 he was overthrown and Guatemala entered a decade of turbulent civil war that did not end until 1931 and the election of General Jorge Ubico as president.

Cut from the same cloth as Estrada Cabrera, Ubico managed to rule rather more efficiently than had his predecessor, modernizing the country's health and social welfare systems. He outlawed the existing system of indebted servitude, freeing the overwhelming majority of the lower classes from something close to slavery, but instituted the nearly identical concept of public labor contributions for road-building and other projects. One of these projects was the vast presidential palace in Guatemala City.

Guatemala is a republic with twenty-two departments. The head of state, the president, is elected by vote of the populace to a term of four years. He is assisted by a vice-president and a cabinet. The currency of Guatemala is the Quetzal, named after the national bird whose colorful plumage was and is so highly prized. Societal division between those of native and Hispanic descent are more rigid than in neighboring Mexico. In Guatemala, the highland Maya, sheltered from direct exploitation at the hands of the colonial government by the Franciscan friars in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, retain their traditional culture and language. But the region surrounding Guatemala City was under the direct administration of the colonial government without any of the tempering influence of the friars. Here the Mayan way of life gave way to a hybrid culture that was neither Maya or Hispanic. This "Ladino" culture occupies the middle ground between the Hispanic, European, and North American elite.

The Maya, meanwhile, live in a style not greatly different from that which the common Maya pursued before the arrival of the Spanish. Spanish is the dominant language in the country as a whole and is widely spoken even in the highlands. Here the Maya yet maintain the Quiche dialect of their forebears. Life for the Maya in the highlands of Guatemala is not substantially different from that of the Maya of the Yucatán outlined above.

El Salvador

The Pipil Maya were among the toughest opponents that the conquistadors had to face in their invasion of Mesoamerica. Once under Spanish rule, the Pipil did not prosper under this outside authority. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the rich volcanic soil spurred on aggressive colonization by land-hungry Spanish immigrants, eager to cater to the booming textile markets of Europe. Wealthy colonists stole land from the Maya to cultivate indigo - the basic ingredient from which the dye of the same name was derived. But indigo production was a dirty and disease-ridden business. Entire villages were wiped out by vermin and the attendant disease they carried. These abhorrent conditions spawned four major revolts in the first third of the nineteenth century, the most serious in 1832.

The catalyzing event occurred when a wealthy landowner placed a worker in the stocks. The man's brother, Anastasio Aquino, led a revolt with the slogan, "Land for those who work it." Thousands of Mestizos and Indians joined the cause, occupying the city of San Vincente. But while attempting to consolidate their gains, the rebels were allowing the national forces time to respond. A Pan-Central American army was formed and this quickly defeated the poorly armed and equipped rebel force. Aquino was executed and his head publicly displayed.

The indigo craze fell and a new crop, coffee, began to predominate on the plantations. In an effort to increase coffee bean production, a decree was issued that allowed title to Indian communal land simply by planting coffee on it. There were five more rebellions between 1872 and 1898. In order to keep control of a continually rebellious population, President Geraldo Barrios turned to foreign military advisors from France and Spain to professionalize the Salvadoran armed forces. This was the beginning of a tradition of foreign military advisors to El Salvador that continued through to the interwar years. The army saw near constant use in putting down local insurrections and the occasional major revolt.

Coffee production was, if anything, harder on the Salvadoran economy and the average Salvadoran than the earlier indigo trade had been. Between 1880 and 1930, virtually every Salvadoran president was a coffee grower. By the early 1930s, only ten percent of the population owned land. Encouraged by the socialist rebellions in Russia and Mexico, a spirit of revolution began once again to take hold among the Indians and mestizos of El Salvador. When Augustin Farbundo Marti returned to his homeland from Nicaragua in 1930, rebellion was assured.

Marti, who had come from a middle-class landowning family, discovered communism at the National University in San Salvador and adopted it with great fervor. In a classroom debate, he once challenged a professor to a duel over a point of sociological theory. In the late 1920s, Marti went to Nicaragua and met the rebel leader Augusto Cesar Sandino, whom he hoped to convert to Marxism. He was unsuccessful and returned to El Salvador to attempt to weld the students, peasants, and workers into a single force. In 1930, he became First Secretary of the Communist Party of El Salvador.

Almost immediately a schism appeared within the plantation owners political ranks. Progressive owners wanted to mollify the aggravated workers with better wages, better conditions, free public education, and land grants. In 1931, Arturo Aranjo, leader of the liberal faction became president. Immediately a three day demonstration was begun outside his residence calling for land reform. This concerned the conservative coffee interests, who had strong ties with the army. When the new president tried a compromise solution to soothe the situation, he pleased neither the Conservatives nor the demonstrators. When Aranjo called for cuts to the defense budget and to army salaries, the army moved in and deposed him on 31 December 1931. Ultraconservative Vice President and War Minister General Maximilian Hernandez Martinez became President.

Martinez was a small unprepossessing man, but he had a reputation as a mystic and was called "El Brujo," the Warlock. He was known to sit for hours gazing at the sun, to hold or sponsor seances, possibly even to commune with spirits and ancestors. But Martinez was also a cunning politician. One of his first actions was to put off municipal elections long enough for the communists to register candidates. He then suspended elections entirely, but not before he had a list of communists upon which to focus his attentions. The suspension of elections galvanized the communists into the realization that there would be no change from within the established order. The decision to rebel was made, but with the names of the leaders in the hands of President Martinez, it was doomed to failure.

The government became aware of the planned revolt almost as soon as did the rebels themselves. A San Salvador newspaper actually published the intended day of rebellion in an issue several days before the scheduled event. The communist leaders apparently decided to go ahead with their plans regardless, perhaps because there was insufficient time to contact the many outlying leaders. Three days before the revolt was to occur, police arrested Farabundo Marti and two other communist leaders. They were later executed by firing squad.

On the actual morning of the rebellion, Izalco Volcano and half a dozen other volcanoes in northern Central America erupted in a tremendous fury. Volcanic ash blackened the skies as Indians and mestizos avenged centuries of mistreatment by the Ladino landowners. Nearly one hundred landowners were killed, many more merchants and others as the revolution spread beyond its scope. But greater massacres were to follow. President Martinez sent out the National Guard as well as various vigilante groups. Armed with rifles and submachine guns, they completely overmatched the mainly machete-armed natives. The result was never in doubt. Twenty thousand people, nearly one-fiftieth of the population of the country, were killed in the two months that came to be known as "La Matanza."

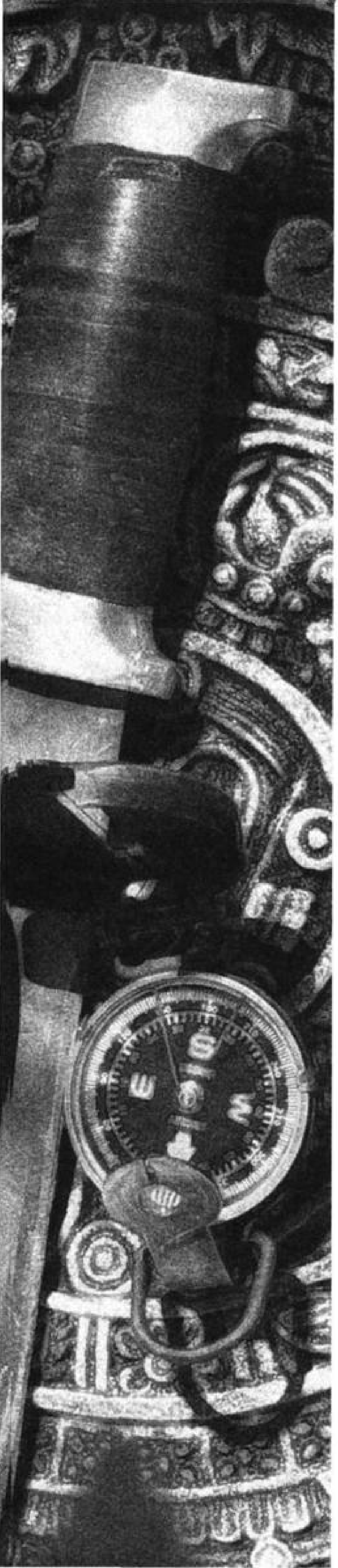
After "La Matanza," left wing activity was nonexistent for over a decade. The Indians almost entirely renounced their culture, dreams, and native language in order to survive.

El Salvador and the World

Prior to World War II there was essentially no American political presence in El Salvador. In fact, when the 1932 insurrection broke out, an American naval commander in the area offered to land the marines but was politely refused. President Martinez had other allies, however, particularly the fascist European states of Germany, Italy, and Spain. El Salvador was one of the first nations to recognize Franco's Spanish regime, as well as the Japanese occupation of Manchuria in 1931. Under Martinez, the Fascist National Pro-Homeland Party became the sole political party allowed in El Salvador. Black-shirted militia were turned out, closely emulating the brown-shirts of the Nazis. Mussolini even provided Martinez with a squadron of Caproni fighter planes and bombers. In 1938, an active colonel in the German army, Eberhardt Bohnstadt, was appointed as director of the El Salvador's military academy and advisor to the country's high command.

Honduras

For most of the sixteenth century, Honduras was an important Spanish colony, due to the large silver deposits discovered in the central highlands. The boom, in turn, created the need for meat and leather goods, so a strong cattle industry arose around the mining centers of Tegucigalpa and Comayagna. This boom continued until the 1580s, when labor shortages made mining in Honduras



less profitable that in Mexico or Peru. The shortage was probably caused, or at least exacerbated, by European diseases that were at this time ravaging the native population. The number of Indians and mestizos in Honduras dropped from around one half million to little more than fifty thousand. An economic depression developed in this vacuum of population and enterprise that lasted throughout the seventeenth century and from which the country never fully recovered.

When granted independence from Spain in 1821, Honduras had the least developed economy and most often manipulated government in Central America. Often this manipulation came at the hands of the administrations of Nicaragua, Guatemala, or El Salvador. With little in the way of stability or political will to block their access, the United States moved into the void. U.S. charge d'affaires Ephraim George Squires ushered in a plan to modernize Honduras with railroads. In 1852, the Honduran Congress granted Squires the exclusive rights to lay track for a national railroad from Tegucigalpa to the north coast. Washington forwarded twenty thousand dollars for the cause. This was appropriated by Tegucigalpa to fund a border war against Guatemala.

The land of Honduras is not rich in the volcanic soil that made first indigo, then coffee, such profitable commodities in the other Central American countries. Instead, banana production became the national industry. As with indigo and coffee in the other states, the produce was largely intended for export. But as bad as the export commodities may have been for the majority of the people of Mesoamerica, banana production was worse for the Hondurans. Indigo and coffee had at least provided a measure of wealth and development to the countries which grew them, because most of the plantation owners were nationals rather than foreign companies. But the banana industry was organized far more centrally within the companies themselves. Little, if any, of the money derived from banana production stayed in Honduras. Grower firms, exporters, and construction companies associated with the banana industry were invariably owned by foreign companies, who did not even bank in Honduras. The entire industry was a tremendous drain upon the labor and resources of Honduras, giving little in return. Government railways in other countries link cities to each other and the coast, encouraging and easing communication and commerce. Honduran railroads served the fields and the plantations alone.

Between 1910 and 1930, the United Fruit Company gained lease or actual control to over four hundred thousand acres of Honduran land, usually in the form of railway construction concessions. These lines were of little use to most Hondurans however, or to anyone other than United Fruit, whose chief Honduran subsidiary, Tela Railroad, built an ice plant, generators, a hospital, and a one-thousand foot wharf in Tela to make it the leading banana port in the Caribbean by 1920. Tela, along with Puerto Cortés, La Lima, and El Progresso were essentially company towns. The capital, Tegucigalpa, became a near ghost town as Hondurans from all over the country flocked to the supposed benefits offered by the fruit companies.

Scores of officials were on the payroll of United Fruit. The company was virtually exempt from taxation and had considerable influence in all circles of authority in Honduras, including the military, justice, and law-enforcement systems. When a strike erupted in the early 1930s, company director, John Turnbull, bribed a union official to gain the names of the instigators. He turned the list over to Honduran Army General Salvador Asmeras, who arrested those so identified.

The decade or so prior to the First World War was a turbulent one for Honduras, as United Fruit waged an actual war against another company, the Cuyamel Banana Company. The upstart was owned by Samuel Zemurray, a Russian Jewish immigrant to the United States who arrived in Tela in 1905 and expanded his operations at a staggering rate. His combination of ruthless business tactics, political machinations, and outright intervention in the military and the Honduran presidency made him United Fruit's chief rival in the nation's politics in less than a decade.

Zemurray used the Taft administration's interest in increasing the economic and political influence of the United States in Central America to acquire overwhelming political strength in Honduras. Outmaneuvering the American banking concerns selected to finance President Miguel Davila, Zemurray enlisted former President Manuel Bonilla and gave him a surplus navy gunboat and enough men to form a rebel army. Zemurray also hired Lee Christmas, a black American mercenary and former banana train engineer in Guatemala as the military leader of the revolution. Christmas was a hard-bitten character with a reputation for biting off the rims of drinking glasses during drinking binges.

The Taft government attempted to put a stop to Zemurray's plot, but without success. In late 1911 Christmas took the town of Trujillo, Washington withdrew its support from Davila, and a state department representative picked Dr. Bertrand from a short list prepared by Zemurray to be interim president. Bertrand was in power less than a year, during which he accepted huge operating loans for the presidency from Zemurray. He then fixed an election which allowed Bonilla to take over the presidency. Bonilla, in turn, appointed Christmas commander-in-chief of the Honduran military, and a former New Orleans policeman, Guy "Machine Gun" Maloney, as chief strike-breaker. Zemurray was effectively sole dictator of Honduras. He further extended his support by financing the Honduran Liberal Party (United Fruit supported the Conservatives). Though there was occasional political and military sniping from both sides for years, full-fledged hostilities erupted in 1925.

British Honduras

For much of the sixteenth century, the Maya who lived in what later became British Honduras, were left largely unmolested by the Spanish who were intent on conquest over the rest of Mesoamerica. In the early years of the century, explorers Vicente Yanez Pinzon and Juan Diaz de Solis sailed up the coast to claim everything from Honduras to the Yucatán for the Spanish crown, but they had little impact upon the Maya here. Not long after, missionaries appeared among the Maya in the northern part of the country at Lamanai. The Maya were friendly until the missionaries built a church and commanded them to attend. The church was burned. Several years later, another attempt was made to Christianize the natives. Another church was built. It too was put to the torch. But no other hostilities occurred, and the Spaniards did little to bother the Maya of Lamanai or elsewhere in British Honduras. Instead, the efforts of Cortés and his many followers and imitators was concentrated in neighboring Guatemala and the Yucatán. Slaves, gold, spices, furs, feathers, and other luxury goods were to be had in abundance there. What need was there to attempt new inroads when so much awaited exploitation closer at hand. In fact, even in later centuries, natives and mestizos unhappy about persecution or abuse in their homelands in the Yucatán and elsewhere travelled to British Honduras for relief from oppression.

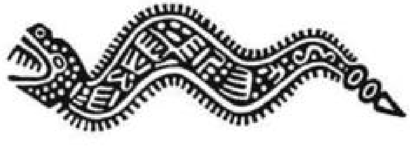
In the early years of the seventeenth century, pirates and loggers found the shores of the region favorable. The sheltered cayes of the coast became prime territory to ambush passing Spanish plate-ships or evade the patrolling warships of the Spanish crown. A treacherous and unreadable barrier reef further endeared the coast to pirates and privateers. The smaller ships of the freebooters, with less draft, could negotiate the waters of the reef far more readily than the big pirate-hunters sent after them. St. Georges Caye became a particularly favoured haunt, where the crews would catch and cook the abundant sea-turtles of the area. A more or less permanent habitation grew up there and began what became a lucrative fishing industry throughout the 1800s.

The loggers who were so prevalent in the Yucatán in earlier centuries were driven out by constant Spanish harassment and moved to the verdant forest of the British Honduras, building meager thatched huts on the muddy bank of what became the Belize River. By the mid-seventeenth century, logwood became highly prized in Europe for the quality of the dyes which could be rendered from it. So lucrative was the trade that many pirates went into logging instead. They became known as Baymen, because they would haul the logs across the Bay of Honduras. This raucous group regularly tormented the Puritans who had migrated from Nicaragua and Honduras. A report to the British Trade Council from 1705 called the Belize settlement a "River of Bullies."

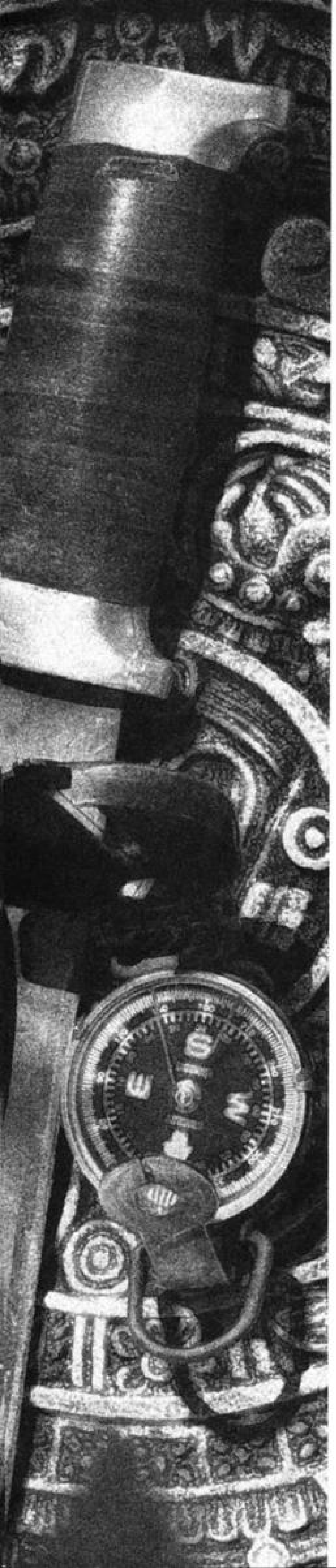
Much of the eighteenth century was a boom period for the region in general and the British Baymen in particular. The logging industry was flourishing, and piracy was always a possible vocation in years of shortage. The Spanish, who still officially laid claim to the entirety of the New World, made intermittent forays into the territory to attempt to take the now profitable region for Spain. In 1763, with the end of French and Indian Wars of the New World and of the Seven Years War on the Old, Spain acknowledged the right of the Baymen to cut the logwood that they had been harvesting for over a century.

The logging industry made certain that the slave trade flourished. West African slaves were brought and sold to the Baymen each spring to cut and haul the timbers prized across the Atlantic. Natives from other parts of Mesoamerica, or from the Caribbean were also sold here and elsewhere. Interbreeding between the English overlords and their slaves gave rise to the Creole population of British Honduras, in the twentieth century the largest ethnic group in the country.

The West Africans brought little in the way of material possessions with them to the New World of their captors. But they did bring "Obeah," the mixture of magic, ritual, and the pagan religion of their homeland. Moonlit celebrations of the Ancestors and the African tribal gods were common in the swamps and fields.



In 1807, the stratified society of the Baymen and their slaves changed with the abolition of slavery by the British government. Many of the landlords refused to give up their free labor. Others had been pressuring Britain to outlaw slavery for decades. Over the course of the century,



the homogenous culture that exists currently grew from the new challenges and freedom found by the former slaves.

Since the arrival of the British interests that came to dominate the country, British Honduras had been subject to frequent raids and abortive conquests from Spain. Originally spurned as not being a worthwhile jewel in the Spanish crown, once it had begun to prosper Spain attempted time and again to exert control. The final attack came in 1798, near St. George's Caye, then the capital of the British colony. A number of Spanish galleons sailed into the harbor and a battle ensued when they where challenged by the British ships in port at the time. After a fierce cannon exchange, the Spaniards retreated to open water, where the big ships with more sail could escape. This was the last attempt on the part of Spain to wrest the prize from Britain. Half a century later, in 1862, the colony officially was recognized as British Honduras.

The 1800s were a turbulent period for most of Mesoamerica, but British Honduras was comparatively calm while the Caste War raged in the Yucatán. Thousands of Maya and Mestizos escaped the constant upheaval by settling the northern British Honduras and the outlying cayes. In the north, the trees had long been cut down by the logging industry. The newcomers planted sugar cane, which began what became the single greatest industry in the country in the twentieth century. In this region is the strongest evidence of the Maya-Spanish culture that predominates over most of the rest of Mesoamerica, but is not typical of British Honduras.

The logging concerns had a difficult time in the nineteenth century, going through a recurring cycle of boom and bust. By the end of the century, accessible forests were exhausted. Sugar cane did very well in the north, and bananas plantations were begun in the south. Sapodilla trees were cultivated and their sap harvested for the "chicle" industry, the essential ingredient in all chewing gum of the period.

The nineteenth century also saw immigration from Honduras to the south. One such immigration involved a single group rather than scattered and hopeless refugees. Originally African slaves that had run aground on the Caribbean island of St. Vincent in the 1600s, they intermarried with the local Carib Indians and gave rise to the Garifuna, a close knit culture with customs that were a mixture of African and Carib tribal practice. Their religion, based on the worship of deceased ancestors, and their insistence on self-rule ran them afoul of the British authorities in the Caribbean. After several abortive attempts at "integrating" the Garifuna, the British eventually drove them away from St. Vincent. The dispossessed group settled in Honduras, Guatemala, and British Honduras on the mainland.

Here the Garifuna reestablished themselves and their self-reliant society in a number of outposts along the coast of the Caribbean. Here too, the colonial government sought to suppress or convert the religion of the Garifuna to Christianity. But the Garifuna simply added a gloss of Christian ritual to their own and continued with their belief unmodified. Most "dugu" ceremonies, as the Garifuna religious rites were called, were held in secret, in swamps or marshes, or other remote sites free from the scrutiny of the colonial authorities or those who informed for them. It was not until long after the end of the period discussed in this book, that the Garifuna worshipped openly. At this time, they were necessarily secretive, and an air of sinister mystery was often associated with them in the minds of other citizens. The self-sufficiency of the Garifuna reinforced this impression by being reclusive and sometimes suspicious of outsiders.

Mesoamerica - The Land

A general note: The Keeper or one or more of the players may be familiar with the areas described in this section from holiday trips or travel programs on television, etc. One phrase should be held in mind in this regard - "That was now, this is then." Mesoamerica in the period before World War II was not a primeval wilderness of unending savagery, but it also was not Club Med and the Holiday Inn. Tourism as an industry, really only took off after 1945. The places that today are common holiday destinations were often unknown or nonexistent in the period prior to this. The Keeper should be sure to keep the players off balance by noting that hotels and hotel accommodations are nearly unknown here. Many local people are suspicious of strangers, especially foreigners, who often come to loot the land's buried artifacts.

Mexico

Geographically, Mexico is widely varied. Lush tropical rainforests, barren deserts, fertile plains, rushing river valleys, and more may all be found as one travels the country. A journey from east to west or north to south could take the traveller into as many as thirty different types of terrain.

Although the stereotypical impression of wildly gyrating tribespeople in ecstatic communion with otherworldly powers in secretive ceremonies in isolated groves is the most obvious use of the Garifuna in the Mythos world, it is by no means the only one. Imagine the difficulty the investigators might have if it were necessary for them to gain the trust of a Garifuna religious leader. Even investigators of color might have to go through a great deal in order to be accepted by the insular Garifuna. Perhaps the Garifuna hold a secret of great value to the investigators, or to the opposition, or both. Perhaps a local Garifuna settlement has become the target of a curse or a supernatural predator. Their ancestors warn and foretell doom, but for some reason the community is powerless to combat the threat themselves. Or the Garifuna might mistake nosiness on the part of the investigators for the precursor to another round of persecution.

You might even want to encourage a player to design a character of Garifuna origin, though if you do so, the way in which you use the culture will necessarily change. The same level of mystery and suspicion will be impossible to create or maintain, but the character's background can itself inspire a number of stories. The meddling of dead ancestors, who may love, hate, or be indifferent to the character, could introduce any number of scenarios. Having a character with a local background is also great for reinforcing the sense that the other characters already have of being outsiders, something that Caucasian characters should be all too familiar with in all but a few social encounters in Mesoamerica. Encourage the Garifuna player to take skills with cultural ties. Not only are they wonderful aids to the Keeper, they also make for better role-playing.

Mexico comprises over 1,200,000 square miles. Only twelve percent of that land area is considered arable, and in the first half of the twentieth century, not all of that had been cultivated. One quarter of the country is covered in forests and woodlands. Much of the country is mountainous and ardous in the extreme. Six major and two minor mountain chains, each comprised of numerous individual ranges, dominate the Mexican landscape and determine much of the climate and the environment of the various regions. The mountain ranges criss-cross to divide the country into a series of plateaus, plains, basins, and wetlands.

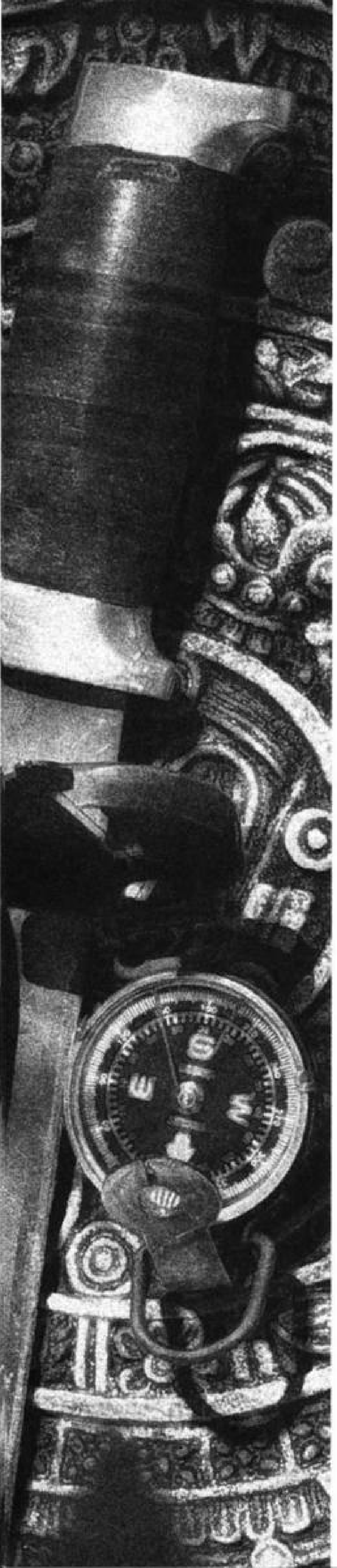
The Sierra Madre mountains of Mexico constitute the greatest extent of mountains in the country. The Sierra Madre Occidental is a continuation of the lofty peaks that comprise the Rocky Mountains to the north. In places the occidental range is over 200 miles wide and separates the majority of Mexico from Baja as effectively as does the Sea of Cortés. Volcanic in origin, the Occidental range is rugged, with steep canyons, and high waterfalls, along the eastern escarpment. Facing to the west, more gentle slopes descend to the coastal plains. Pine and oak forests cover much of the higher elevations, where snow is common.

The Sierra Madre Oriental runs along the coast of the Gulf of Mexico for approximately 800 miles. A sedimentary chain, it is predominantly composed of limestone peaks riddled with caves, pits, and cenotes, some hundreds of feet deep. Averaging less than 100 miles in width is still poses a effective barrier to travel and acts as a buffer to the cool air off the Gulf. Moisture laden winds from the east dump heavy rainfall on the eastern slopes of the Oriental range, creating a lush semitropical forest on the coast. West of the range the breezes have no water, and do little to cool the arid central plains of the Mohave desert.

The Sierra Transversal de Zacatecas, La Brena y San Luis Potosi, link the two Madre chains east to west just beneath the Tropic of Cancer. This primarily volcanic chain divides the northern plateau from the southern.The highest peaks of this extremely dry chain are about 10,000 feet.

Farther south, on the latitude of Vera Cruz and running parallel to the Sierra Transversal, is the Cordillera Neo-Volcanica. Another more rugged range of volcanic origin, these mountains contain the highest peaks in Mexico, including Pico de Orizaba, the tallest in Mexico at nearly 18,000 feet, third tallest in North America.

Two other chains extend southeast from the Cordillera Neo-Volcanica. The Sierra Madre del Sur continues where the Sierras of Baja are interrupted by the Sea of Cortés. An extension of the San Andreas faultline, this is the most seismically active area in Central America. Along the Pacific side of this range are hundreds of miles of beautiful beaches, in the modern day the sites of numerous renowned resorts, but essentially undeveloped in the years before World War II.



In the State of Chihuahua, one hundred and twenty-five miles from Chihuahua City, is a region called the ***Zone of Silence****. Normal radios do not work in this 1500 square mile region. All such signals are completely jammed, though the cause is not known. Rumors of bizarre animals, anomalous magnetic phenomena, vortices, mysterious lights, and unknown flying craft abound in the area. Meteorites are a common sight as they streak across the night sky. The largest known meteorite in the world - the Allende Meteorite - struck here in 1969, exploding just before impact with the ground and scattering tons of fragments to the earth for miles around.*

Sand vortices are recorded commonly throughout the region, sometimes in utterly calm and windless conditions. Rumors also abound of hairy bipedal creatures that live in the deserts. It is even claimed that mutant tortoises and insects, both grown to up to three times their usual size, have been found here.

The Sierra Oaxaca parallels the Gulf Coast on the eastern edge of southern Mexico, from Pico de Orizabo south for 200 miles to the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, Mexico's narrowest point. The ranges of the Sierra Madre de Chiapas and the Sierra Septentrional de Chiapas continue from the isthmus into Guatemala.

The Sierra de Baja California extends over the majority of the rugged Baja Peninsula. An extension of the Rocky Mountains that pushes out into the Pacific, the chain is separated from mainland Mexico by the Sea of Cortés.

Divided by the many mountain chains the various flatter regions of the country are divided into three major groups. The vast plateau between the Sierra Madre Occidental and the Sierra Madre Oriental is generally known as the Altiplano ("high plain"). Covering over nearly 40 percent of Mexico's surface, it consists of the type of desert terrain most usually pictured when thinking of Mexico. At its northern edge, it averages over 3000 feet above sea level, but as it moves south it ascends to over twice that height. Much of the Altiplano is grassland, desert, or scrubland, but when irrigation is possible, the ground is remarkably fertile. In the middle of the Altiplano are a large number of large depressions or basins which cover the plains. These contain much of the runoff from the mountains and are often seasonal or permanent lakes. Often these lakes are the only sources of water on the Altiplano.

The "Depression del Balsas" is the second plateau region, surrounded by the Cordillera Neo-Volcanica, Sierra de Oaxaca, and the Sierra Madre del Sur. Consisting of a group of elevated valleys, the balsas contain Mexico's most densely populated towns and cities. Roughly half of the country's population lives here in about one-seventh of the land area.

The Plataforma Yucateca is the third region of plateaus, the flattest and lowest of the three, and covers nearly the entirety of the Yucatán Peninsula. A broad limestone plateau, it has little in the way of surface drainage, but is riddled with subterranean passages, caves, cenotes, and waterways, so central to the cosmology of the Mesoamericans. The entire area is covered either in low tropical forest or tropical savannah.

Along both its western and eastern shores, Mexico has many stretches of coastal plain. Primarily these are located on the Pacific Coast, where a large number of plains sweep down from the mountains of the Baja, Occidental, and del Sur ranges, often ending in sandy beaches. Occasionally, scatterings of high, sheer cliffs interrupt the accessible coastline.

The Gulf coastal plains form a wide belt along the Gulf of Mexico from the northern to the southern ends of the country. From the Rio Bravo delta to Vera Cruz, the climate is mild and moist, with many rivers from the interior opening out into the sea. Inland plains areas are fertile, supporting rich farming and ranching interests.

Beyond Vera Cruz, as the land curves eastward, more and more river deltas divide the coastline. Many fast-moving rivers and streams, which become deadly in times of flood, carry rich alluvial soil from the uplands to the deltas. Tropical wetlands extend over most of this coastal region. In the years before the Second World War, this was an area dominated by wildlife, bandits, and occasionally banana plantations. Many of the most famous pre-Columbian sites are waiting to be freed from the ever encroaching vegetation. On the Yucatán's eastern shore, the rainforests give way to beaches and clear seas. Far fewer river outlets break up the long stretches of sand.

Reaching south from the southwestern United States, the Sonoran and Chihuahuan deserts dominate much of northern Mexico. Centered between the Sierra Madre de Occidental and the Sierra Madre Oriental, the Altiplano is dominated by the Chihuahuan desert. A mixture of true desert, dry grassland, and scrubland, the Chihuahuan desert is defined by its lack of water. Most places average less than 12 inches of water per year, concentrated in the winter months. Temperatures are extreme. In summer highs of over 110 degrees Fahrenheit are common with chilly nights. Winters commonly see weather below freezing even in the lower elevations of this fairly high plateau.

The landscape is dominated by desert plants such as creosote bush, tarpaper bush, whitethorn acacia, peyote cactus, candellila, and cruciform thorn. The tall tubular cactus so common in the Sonoran desert are not found here. The flora of the Chihuahuan desert are typically low, ground-hugging bushes and cacti.

The Sonoran desert extends from the California-Nevada border south to the tip of the Baja Peninsula. On the mainland it is divided from the Chihuahuan Desert by the Sierra Madre de Occidental, and covers much of the northern coastal plain that overlooks the Pacific. Great rainfall differentiation in various regions mean that the Sonoran Desert is less singular in appearance than the Chihuahuan. The dryest areas, around the Rio Colorado get less than three inches of rain annually. Others receive up to sixteen inches per year. The landscape is dominated by the tall, columnar saguaro cactus, interspersed with various scrub bushes and many other, less prominent cacti, distinguishing the Sonoran Desert from the Chihuahuan to the east.

Lake Amatitlan *(Note: the ancient habitations at Lake Amatitlan were not discovered until 1957 by Stephen Borhgegyi).*

This Mexican lake is seven and a half miles long by one quarter mile wide. Surrounded by lava hills, the shores are in most places precipitous, but along the southern shore these hills are home to extensive early habitation. Five unexcavated mounds here date probably to between 1000 and 200 B.C.E. Another four are from the Maya Classic period, 300 to 600 C.E. Finally, there is a late classic site (600 to 900 C.E.) consisting of twenty-five mounds. Each successive site is further up the cliffs away from the waters of the lake. Whether this is for purposes of defense or due to rising water levels is not known.

Discoveries in the lakebed include hundreds of pieces of pottery and ceramic. One brown-black jar decorated with a face was still sealed and found to contain liquid mercury and pieces of cinnabar, graphite, and hundreds of fragments of smashed jade ear spools. This may have been an offering to the gods of the waters. There is no known mercury mine in Central America, nor is it known how the Maya refined the raw cinnabar into mercury. The origin of the jar is a mystery. So too is the use the Maya might have had for the metal.

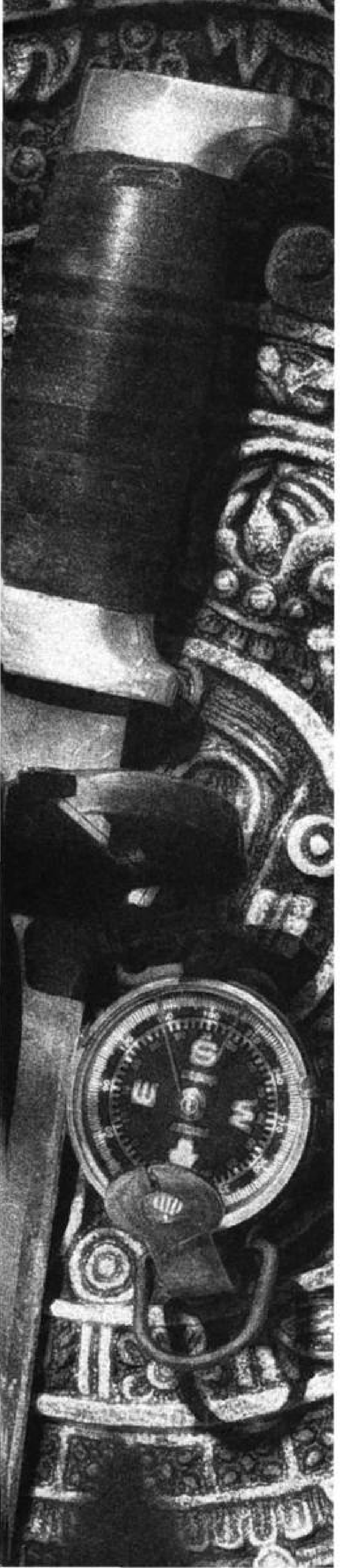
Most of the woodland and evergreen forest to be found in Mexico covers the many mountain ranges. Elevations over 6500 feet are dominated by conifer forests of pine, cedar, and juniper. Lower areas are similar, but form a transition zone to the plains. The conifer forests of the highlands give way to woodlands of evergreen oaks, various junipers, and a scattering of pines.

The lower, warmer foothills of the Sierras in Tamaulipas on the Gulf coast and from Sinaloa to Guerrero on the Pacific side are covered by tropical and sub-tropical deciduous forests. Lianas, orchids, figs, and bromeliads are common here. The trees are primarily acacias and mesquite. Here the majority of plants drop their greenery for the long, dry winter months and become green again for the summer and autumn.

Further south and stretching through the eastern Tamaulipas to Vera Cruz and Chiapas are the cloud forests. Here, much of the water for plant growth is derived from the nearly constant cloud cover created as the warm moist air from the Gulf and the Caribbean hits the mainland.

Lowland tropical rainforest envelopes the southern Yucatán and northeastern Chiapas. Here rainfall is heavy most of the year with seasonal droughts in spring and late summer. The vegetation is extremely thick and constantly encroaching upon the works of man. Nineteenth century explorers would often fail to find a previously denuded site due to the degree to which the rainforest rejuvenated. Ruins exposed entirely through the efforts of local bearers and guides might be completely recovered in only a few years. The destructive power of the vegetation was also considerable. Columns and inscriptions that were intact and decernible on one excursion might be cracked and worn beyond decipherment in just a few seasons, especially if they had been cleared of vegetation previously.

Often found as a dividing zone between the desert scrublands of the plains and the woodlands which cover the foothills and lower mountains, the "matorral" consists of a more sparse forest of thorny trees and scrub. Squat multi-trunked trees with sharp thorns predominate, interspersed with thornbushes and other shrubs. The climate is



dry and temperate, with hot summers and cool winters.

Grassland is common throughout Mexico and is another transitional terrain type. Semidesert grassland is found where woodlands give way due to decreasing moisture into desert or scrubland. In between, where there is still sufficient moisture, flourishes dry grassland composed of mixed grasses such as buffalo grass, toboso, or black grama. Cacti and other succulents, as well as acacia and mesquite scrub are also found here. In the south, in areas where there is considerably more rainfall, savannah grassland and tropical grassland occur. Thicker, lush grasses, as well as shrubs and evergreens predominate. Where the rainforest loosens its hold in the lower Yucatán Peninsula, tropical grassland takes over.

British Honduras

British Honduras is typical of the subtropical rainforest climate that predominates over much of Mesoamerica. The weather patterns are defined by a cycle of rainy and dry seasons. Rainfall and hot temperatures are common from June to October. These daily rains can soak inland jungle roads in minutes, creating nearly impassable pathways of muck. Summer rains increase dramatically in British Honduras from north to south. Northern Corozal averages approximately fifty inches of rain annually; while Punta Gorda, two hundred miles to the south, receives nearly one hundred and seventy inches per year. During the summer months, afternoon rains give life to the forest and cool the stifling heat of the rainforest. Temperatures of ninety-five degrees are typical throughout the summer.

Late summer and early fall is the time that the country is most often visited by hurricanes, especially along the Caribbean coast. Every decade or so, a hurricane blows in from the east, leaving death and ruin in its wake. In October, prevailing northerly winds set in, persistent winds of between fifteen and twenty-five knots sweeping down from North America, which cool the months of autumn. From November to March, during the dry season, the temperatures are in the low eighties. In more mountainous regions cool mists rise at night and the temperatures are correspondingly cooler in the daytime.

Springtime runoff into the Caribbean from the many mountain stream and rivers creates crystal clear waters throughout the caves on the coast. But April and May are tempered neither by cool winds nor daily rainfall. Temperatures are typically over one hundred degrees and suffocatingly humid.

The geography of British Honduras is incredibly diverse for so small a region. Cool pine forests near the sources of the many rivers give way to hot, humid rainforests nearer the coast. Parched savannah separates the tree-covered mountains of the west from the muddy swampland, coastal lagoons, and sheltered caves of the Caribbean coast. The many islands off the coast are a continuation of the Maya Mountains extending out into the Caribbean to create a chain of caves that eventually give way to a barrier reef second only to the Great Barrier Reef off the coast of Australia in size. Hundreds of verdant coral islands dot the waters off the coast. Elsewhere, tidally submerged or fully underwater reefs wait to burst the hulls of unwary ships.

On the mainland, the land is composed of a thin layer of fertile soil covering a limestone bed that runs under most of the non-mountainous areas of southern Mesoamerica. Caves and cenotes, caused by seasonal runoff into and through the limestone are joined by twisting passageways and vertical tubes and runnels. To the native people, these extensive tunnel systems were the workings of the otherworld, and gods and spirits walked, hunted, and lived there.

The flatland covering the limestone is the most cultivated area of British Honduras. Sugar cane plantations dominate most of the land under use, but bananas are also a major crop. In the winter months, the entire region may be thick with smoke for days at a time, as cane farmers burn off the stubble of their fields.

Most of the northern part of the country is still overgrown with forests of one kind or another. Mangrove swamps along the coast, pine and palmetto along the watered areas of the central plain, and soggy broadleaf rainforest in the west. Wetlands, fed by ponds, lagoons, or rivers dot the forest, as do abandoned logging camps.

The land across central and western British Honduras is creased with hills, valleys, terraced fields, and the spidery rivers that nourish them. In the district called Cayo, broadleaf jungle is interspersed with great forests of pines where the sandy clay of the soil is rich but fragile. Waterfalls and streams are common, creating awesome vistas and misty stretches of gloomy jungle, with vines trailing out of the fog and roots reaching up to trip the unwary.

The Maya Mountains make a granite spine down the southern part of the country. These rugged, jungled-swathed peaks are marked by deep, forested canyons, shallow valleys, twisting rivers, and rising foothills that eventually stretch into true mountains. The entire area is dominated by rainforest, with areas so dense and remote they have not been traversed by humans for centuries. Toward the border with Guatemala, around and south of ancient Lubaantun, cloud forests prevail, wreathed in trailing mists and fog nearly every day.

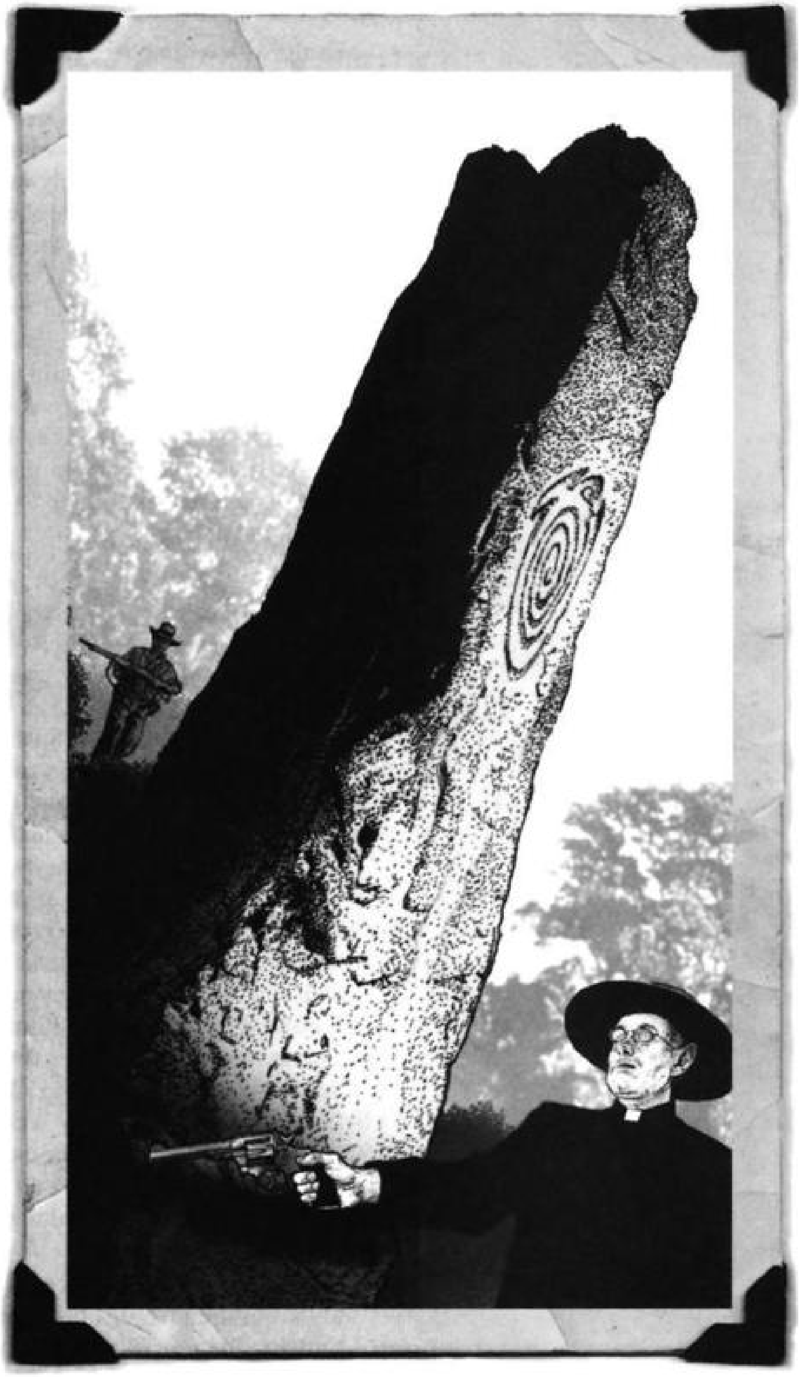
British Honduras is best known for its lush forests. Huge guanacaste trees tower four hundred feet in the air, festooned with flowering vines and creepers, as well as bromeliads and orchids as big as a man's head. The bookut tree's canopy shades the forest floor almost completely. The bookut tree also grows tall and wide, the rank odor of its seed pods attracting the howler monkeys whose eerie cries carry for miles among the trunks and vines of the forest.

On the floor of the rainforest peril awaits the unwary. Footing that appears solid can give way under foot, no more than a froth of water plants floating on a placid pond. Logs in the rivers, stream, or swampy areas that abound in the rainforest suddenly open cavernous jaws and move with sinister purpose to the small watercraft that ply the region. The jaguar, silent stalker of the forest fears no creature in its domain, feeding on man, tapir, and even crocodiles with equal disdain.

Even the foliage of the rainforest can be hazardous. The oozing black sap of the poisonwood tree raises vicious swollen blisters that sting for weeks. (Keepers note: The antidote has been known since the days of the Maya - the sap of the gumbo limbo tree, which is nearly always found nearby the poisonwood, will take the swelling down and neutralize the sting.) The spiny bamboo, found at nearly every riverbank, binds the soil together to halt erosion, but wards itself and its surroundings against intruders with four inch spikes.

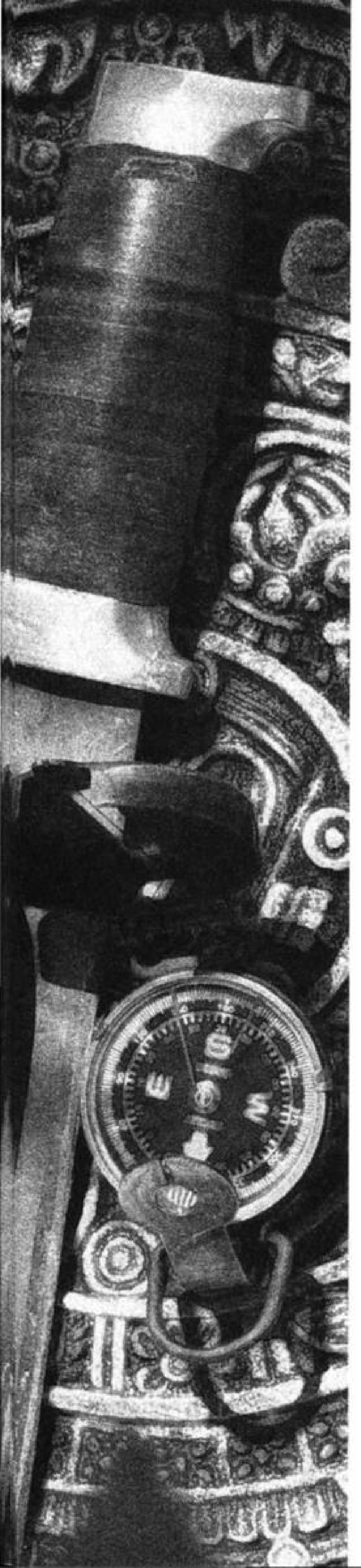
The ubiquitous cohune palm is found in every part of the rainforest and has been exploited by man for millennia. Nearly every part of the tree has some use. Fronds are used for roof thatch, the tender hearts are a delicacy, and the tiny furry nuts are used for oil or burned for charcoal.

Out of the rainforest, the coast is a stereotypically paradise. Shade-giving palms, papaya, and mango trees, bougainvillea and hibiscus bursting with color, mangroves with their exposed roots like gnarled, grasping hands, all dot the sandy stretches of lonely beach.



Guatemala

Guatemala covers an area of approximately 60,000 square miles of mountain forest highlands and jungled



plains. The western highlands are a continuation of the Sierra Madres that extend from Chiapas. Thirty volcanoes reachings heights of well over ten thousand feet dot the range. Many of the volcanos are still active, some spewing smoke almost continually. Land that has not been cleared here for cornfields is verdant pine forest. Earthquakes are not uncommon.

The Pacific slope of Guatemala flows from the coastal plains of Chiapas to the north, with rich coffee, cacao, fruit, and sugar plantations. Along the shore the black volcanic sand stretches to the sea, the temperatures are hot and humid. Grasses grow abundantly here and cattle are common.

South and east toward Guatemala City the altitude drops steadily to about fifteen hundred feet at the city itself. North of the capital, the highlands of Alta Verapaz gradually empty into the lowland of El Peten, a continuation of the southern Yucatán. Peten's climate is that of the Yucatán, hot and either humid or dry depending on the season. The hottest months are March and April, the coolest December and January. Southeast of Peten is the valley of the Rios Montagua, dry in some areas, wet in others. Bananas thrive in the Montagua.

The climate in the highlands of Guatemala is often dank and chilly in the rainy season, even reaching the freezing mark occasionally. But from October to May the days are warm and moist. The coastal areas are tropical, rainy, hot, and humid. The rainy and dry seasons are distinct on the Pacific coast and in the highlands. On the Caribbean coast, rain is not confined to a time of year. In some places on the east coat, there is only one dry month per year.

The Old World and the New World

Most of the early Spanish explorers, as well many of the scholars who followed them in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, believed that the natives were incapable of building the elaborate and labor-intensive stone temples, tombs, idols, and palaces they saw in the ruins scattered across the land. This opinion was reinforced by the fact that most of the natives they spoke to did not have complete knowledge of their own past, or an understanding of the engineering involved in the raising of such marvels. Europeans saw primitives living among or near the ruins, but without an understanding of them, and concluded that the ruins must predate the peoples who currently squatted in their shadows. Naturally, given the "advanced" state of European civilization and history, it was decided early that the ruins must have been the result of pre-Columbian invaders from the Old World. Combined with the superficial resemblance of New World pyramids to those of Egypt and Mesopotamia, the theory arose that in ancient times, some sophisticated culture of the Old World brought aspects of their culture to the primitives of the New World.

Below are a number of biographies of European scholars of the centuries prior to that of the investigator's own. The information can be used in a number of ways. Certainly, many of these names will be well known to a twentieth century archaeologist, historian, or anthropologist. Thus you can use these biographies of past scholars as handouts for background information that a researching character might turn up. You might also want to copy some portion of one or more of the past scholars' work as further background handout material.

From there you can move further away from reality. Perhaps John Stevens had a sinister purpose for one or more of his explorations of Mesoamerica. Perhaps the investigators might turn up the mysterious text that convinced Brasseur de Bourbourg that there were ancient connections between the Old World and the New World. Maybe Waldeck's beautiful renderings of various ruins and inscriptions were intentionally misleading rather than unconsciously through prejudice on his part. If so, why? Perhaps the investigators will come to realize that one of the earlier explorers were aware of the Old Ones and the Mythos.

As Keeper, you might also decide that there was some contact between the Old World and the New World. Certainly enough evidence has come to light in the last several decades to make this at least plausible. If there was contact, between, say, the Phoenicians and the Olmecs, what did it involve? Did the Olmecs learn the advanced arts of engineering from the Phoenicians? Did a portion of the Olmec civilization worship a Mythos being and convert the Old World visitors to their belief, creating a vast ancient Cthulhu cult or such? What were the greatest sailors and explorers of the ancient Near East doing across the Atlantic? Did they return to their homes with stories of an advanced civilization in the waters beyond the Pillars of Hercules? Was this the origin of the Atlantis legends made popular by Plato?

Well, you get the idea. There are plenty of other connections that haven't been explored here, some that have probably already come to you on your own.

Diego de Landa

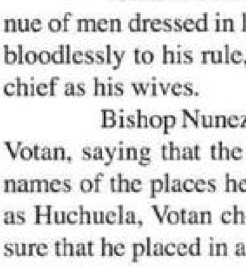
The first Bishop of the Yucatán, de Landa was also the man responsible for recording much of what is now known of the Maya, much of it directly from the Maya themselves or from Maya codices now lost. A man of great faith and intellect, as well as complex feelings and opinions, he often found much to admire in the Maya. He praised the architectural sophistication of the Maya, but denounced its people as bloodthirsty devil-worshippers. His "Relacions de la Cosas de Yucatán," is the single greatest source of information on the sixteenth-century Maya.

He noted that the Maya were not savages, were capable of great feats of engineering, had a complex culture, including agriculture, social stratification, and centralized authority - all, to the European renaissance mind, good things and evidence of great cultural sophistication. The ruined cities that he visited inspired something akin to awe in de Landa, who remarked on the grandeur that must have existed when such structures were new. He deduced many theories concerning the cause of the desertions of so many proud and beautiful cities. At Chichén Itzá, he marvelled at the sacred cenote, the Well of Sacrifice.

Yet for all his interest and admiration for much of Maya life, he was quick and brutal in dealing with those who continued to practice pagan religious rituals. In 1562, one attempted revival of the old ways was ruthlessly put down by tracking down, torturing, and burning those in attendance.

Already in the sixteenth century, de Landa's admiration for Maya engineering was the view of the few. The majority of the conquerors, if they gave it any thought at all, believed that the ruined structures were far too advanced for the primitives that they ruled.

Friar Roman de Ordonez y Aguilar



The Friar discovered Palenque in 1773. As the spiritual voice of Spain in Cuidad Real in Chiapas, Ordonez had heard of a great and spectacular ruin in the jungle some 70 miles from his canon. Having his parishioners bear him on a litter, he travelled to the site. He was stunned by what he saw. Upon his return to his parish he wrote, "A History of the Creation of Heaven and Earth," in which he explained that the ruins which he named "The Great City of Serpents," were built in remote antiquity by a people who came from across the Atlantic under the command of a leader named Votan, whose sacred animal was the serpent.

Ordonez claimed as the source of this assertion a book in the local Quiche (pronounced "kee-shay") language, which drew from a lost work supposedly written by Votan himself. The original, Ordonez asserted, had been destroyed in 1691 by Bishop Nunez de la Vega of Chiapas.

According to Ordonez's narrative, Votan set out from a land called Chivim (the whereabouts of which is not specified) and came to the Yucatán via the "Dwelling of the Thirteen," which Ordonez identifies with the Canary Islands. After making land in what is probably Hispaniola, Votan continued to the coast of Mexico and up the Usumacinta River to found the city now known as Palenque.

Votan is described as having arrived with a retinue of men dressed in long robes, of subjecting the natives bloodlessly to his rule, and of taking the daughters of the chief as his wives.

Bishop Nunez also referred to the ancient book of Votan, saying that the ancient traveller listed the archaic names of the places he visited. At one such place, known as Huchuela, Votan chose a local woman to guard a treasure that he placed in a subterranean house. Bishop Nunez spared no expense to locate this treasure and confiscated it from his guardian. The entirety of the treasure was several clay jars, green stones, and a number of manuscripts. Nunez had the lot publicly burned.

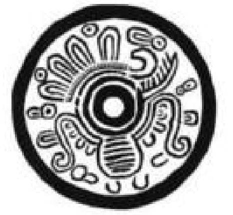
Votan is said to have returned four times to his Valum Chivim over the ocean. Later Ordonez identified Chivim with Tripoli in ancient Phoenicia. Upon one such return, Votan came upon a great city with a magnificent temple intended to reach to the heavens. Bishop Nunez identified this temple with the biblical Tower of Babel.

Ordonez composed all of his findings in a report for the King of Spain, Charles III. He commissioned Don Antonio del Rio to excavate Palenque and make a report. Del Rio's words however, languished in the archives under Charles' successor, Charles the IV. Later it was re-edited by Dr. Felix Paul Cabrera, who proposed that the ruins were

the creation of the Olmecs (who, at that time, were known as nothing more than a name of New World antiquity), who had themselves originated in Carthage.

Another curious manuscript, written in Quiche in 1554, claims that the three Quiche nations are descended from the original ten lost tribes of Israel. The three Maya authors attest to this by signing themselves as the descendants of a people who came from Givan-Tulan, near Babylon.

Jean Frederick Maximillian, Comte de Waldeck (1766?- 1875)



A large, vigorous, broad-shouldered man, it was said of Waldeck, that even near his death at the alleged age of 109, he looked no more than 70. A Viennese aristocrat, and a talented artist, his renderings of the ruins of such sites as Palenque, Mayapán, and Uxmal inspired many later explorers of the region.

A man of restless spirit, he was a lifelong explorer and atavist. In 1785, he journeyed to South Africa. He later fought as a volunteer under Napoleon and was at the siege of Toulon. He went to Egypt with the French army. There he was imprisoned for some time on direct orders from Napoleon himself. Upon his release, he left the army and fleeing from the Turks over Aswan, he was the only survivor of his party of five. After four months of starvation and misery, he staggered into a Portuguese settlement on the coast of the Indian Ocean. Upon recovering his health he sailed upon the Indian Ocean as a privateer.

In 1819, he went to Guatemala for the first time. He returned in 1825 at the age of 60. He spent the next two decades travelling Mesoamerica sketching the ruins as he found them. In 1832, he journeyed to Palenque, where he spent the next several years. After Palenque, he visited Mayapán, Tonina, and Uxmal.

Though his work was published previously, he became famous in scholarly circles in 1866 as the illustrator of the Abbe Brasseur de Bourbourg's, "Monuments anciens de Mexique, Palenque et autres ruies de l'ancienne civilization de Mexique."

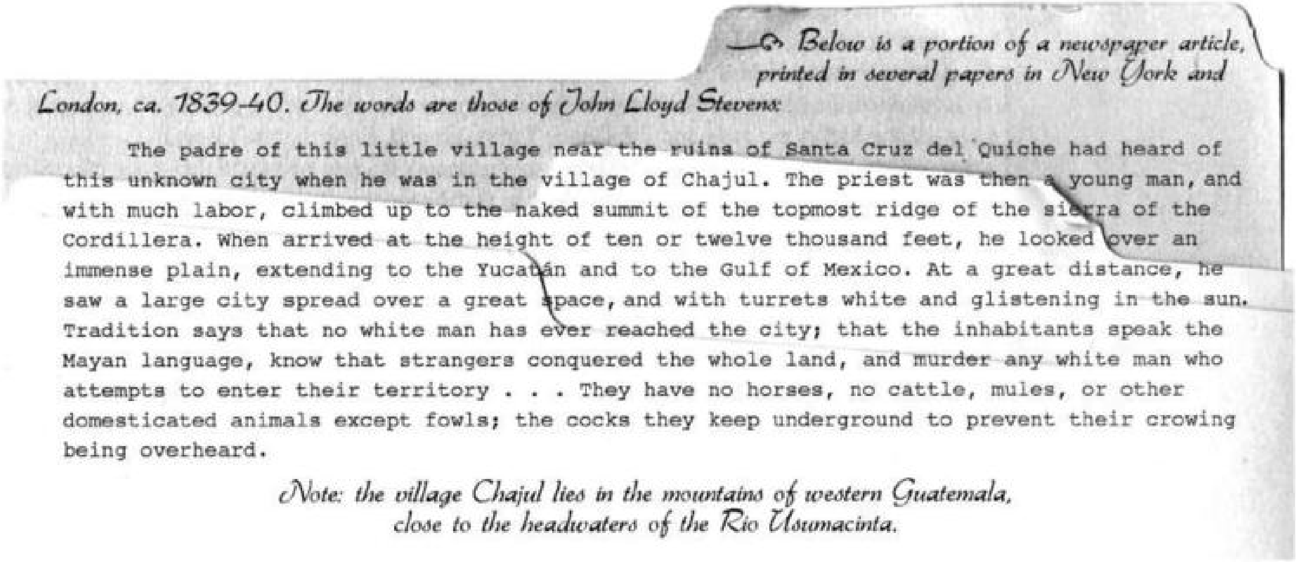
Waldeck saw the influence of the Old World in the inscriptions, statuary, and art of the Maya. His reproductions of the sites he visited reflected this bias, and are much more reminiscent of the ancient Hittite, Hindu, Greek, and Egyptian cultures than of prehistoric Mesoamerica. His friend and fellow scholar Brasseur de Bourbourg's Atlantis theory greatly appealed to him.

Waldeck died at the alleged age of 109, still vigorous and active. He is said to have died after a fall when he turned to look at a pretty woman.

John Stevens

Born to a wealthy New England family, Stevens journeyed widely throughout Europe and the Middle East as a young man. While on his travels, he met Frederick Catherwood, a renowned architect and traveler in his own right. Inspired by Waldeck's books, Stevens and Catherwood determined to explore the hinterland of the Maya.

Stevens' connections in Washington managed to secure a post as the United States charge d'affaires to Central America. In fact, the position was little more than a sinecure to Stevens, and he spent every available moment investigating the ruins of Copán, Quirgua, Tonina, Palenque, and Uxmal. Catherwood's illustrations became the most famous images of the Mesoamerica. Steven's, "Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas, and Yucatán" was published in 1841 and was a major success. Two



Below is a portion of a newspaper article, printed in several papers in New York and London, ca. 1839-40. The words are those of John Lloyd Stevens:

The padre of this little village near the ruins of Santa Cruz del Quiche had heard of this unknown city when he was in the village of Chajul. The priest was then a young man, and with much labor, climbed up to the naked summit of the topmost ridge of the sierra of the Cordillera. When arrived at the height of ten or twelve thousand feet, he looked over an immense plain, extending to the Yucatán and to the Gulf of Mexico. At a great distance, he saw a large city spread over a great space, and with turrets white and glistening in the sun. Tradition says that no white man has ever reached the city; that the inhabitants speak the Mayan language, know that strangers conquered the whole land, and murder any white man who attempts to enter their territory . . . They have no horses, no cattle, mules, or other domesticated animals except fowls; the cocks they keep underground to prevent their crowing being overheard.

Note: the village Chajul lies in the mountains of western Guatemala, close to the headwaters of the Rio Usumacinta.

years later, "Incidents of Travel in the Yucatán" overshadowed even this, and was reprinted almost every year for the remainder of the nineteenth century.

Abbe Charles Etienne Brasseur de Bourbourg

Born in Dunkirk, France, he first travelled to the New World at the age of 31 as the chaplain to the French legation of Mexico City. While there he became keenly interested in the ruins thereabouts. He spoke twelve languages and could read twenty. He quickly added Nahuatl, the language of the Aztecs, to that number and shortly thereafter discovered an Aztec manuscript, which he named the Codex Chimalpopoca. He later learned the language of the Quiche Maya of Guatemala and discovered the Mayan manuscript -- *Popol Vuh*. He uncovered one of the few Maya plays to have survived, the "Rabinal Achi." Then he moved to live among the Cakchiquel Indians, discovering the historical record of that tribe, which he called, "Memorial de Solada." Thereafter, he moved to Boston, Massachusetts.

On an extended visit to Europe in 1857, he published a number of works, among them a translation of the *Popol Vuh*, as well as a grammar and vocabulary of the Quiche tongue.

In 1864 he translated and published Diego de Landa's, "Relacions de las Casas de Yucatán," which until then had languished in obscurity. By 1867, he had become a respected expert in New World history, archaeology, and linguistics.

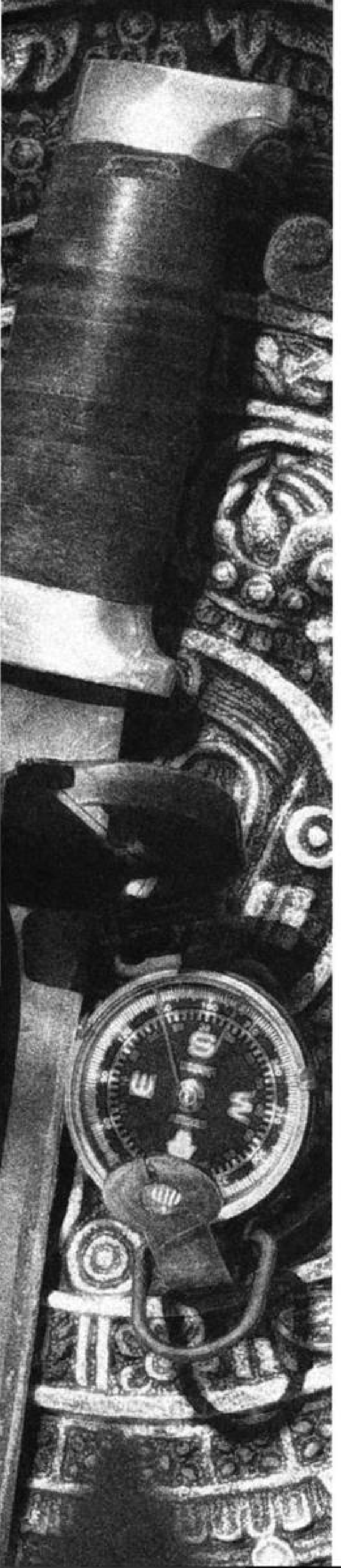
While in Madrid, he was offered the opportunity to read a manuscript in the home of a Spanish collector. He quickly realised it was a Maya document from the period of the Spanish conquest. The manuscript, which became known as the Codex Troano, was published in 1869.

Not long after his reading of the Codex Troano, Brasseur de Bourbourg came to a revelation. At first he felt the codex to be an almanac for a wealthy, rural landowner of the Maya. But as he pondered the manuscript more fully, he came to believe that it held a far greater significance. It struck him that it, and in fact the other remaining Maya codices were actually records of the fall of Atlantis. He began to read the document from front to back searching for a secret key which he was sure could be found in the book, the key to the secrets of an age unguessed at by modern man.

He perceived a similarity between portions of the Maya language and aspects of various archaic Germanic tongues. He discovered that many Maya words were, as he believed, derived from Germanic roots. Eventually, he came to the conclusion that the Mayan texts were allegories, without actual historical basis. What they truly contained, in common with the scrolls of ancient Egypt, was the previously unknown history of Atlantis, the sunken continent and precursor to all the great civilizations of the world. The Egyptian god Horus, he equated with the plumed serpent deity of old Mexico, popularly known by its Aztec name, Quetzalcóatl.

His premise held that the Mayan culture was founded by adventurers from the Old World civilization of Phoenicia. The founder, Votan, built the Maya city of Palenque and founded the empire of Xibalba. The Aztecs, he thought, had originated in Central Asia and embarked upon a world spanning migration, first across Europe, then over the Atlantic to America.

More study would lead him even further afield. The Mesoamericans, he declared, held in common the myth of a great terrestrial convulsion that resulted in the destruction and submergence of a grand island empire in the Atlantic. According to Bourbourg's reading of the Codex Troano as well as the Codex Cortesianus, which turned out to be halves of the same manuscript, this Atlantis disappeared in the year 9937 B.C.E. From his reading of this manuscript and a Nahuatl document referred to by



Bourbourg as the Codex Chimalpopoca, he deduced that the civilization of Atlantis did not arise in the Middle East after all. Instead, the civilization of the Atlantic Empire spread outward both east and west to the Old World and the New World. This also explained the many similarities that he had previously discovered between the languages of the Mesoamerican and the Greek, Latin, French, English, and German.

The Atlantic continent, before its cataclysm, had occupied the space now filled by the Gulf of Mexico, extended over the Caribbean, and further east in a great sweeping arc that reached nearly to the Canary Islands. An unknown disaster of epic scope had destroyed the entirety of Atlantis, save for a few remaining islands. Later lesser upheavals had brought portions of the Yucatán, Honduras, and Guatemala to the surface. The survivors of this disaster came together to preserve what they could of their civilization. They came to be called the Toltecs, their most famous chief Quetzalcóatl.

Bourbourg, along with several others, including Augustus le Plongeon and Jean Frederick de Waldeck, held to the unpopular notion that there were ancient contacts between the cultures of Central America and those of the Near East. They believed that these civilizations derived common cultural points from an, at least vaguely remembered, Atlantean antecedent.

Desire de Charney

Originally from France, de Charney was a womanizer and adventurer who travelled to many remote portions of the globe. At one point in his career, he held a teaching post in New Orleans. He came to Mesoamerica in 1850, and was the first to take high quality photographs of the sites of the New World. On his return in 1858, the ruins of Mitla, Palenque, Izamal, Chichén Itzá, and Uxmal all fell before his lens, and the pictures were published in 1863. Another attempt to photograph the interior was foiled in 1864 by the unstable political situation in Mexico. He would not be allowed to continue his work for over a decade. He went elsewhere, travelling to Madagascar, Java, Australia, South America, and the United States.

In 1880, he was back in Mexico, where he excavated at Tula and Teotihuacan, moved on to Comalcalco and then to Palenque. He pioneered a technique for taking casts of bas-reliefs using papier-mache rather than the plaster that was commonly used for the purpose. This method greatly reduced the weight carried into and out of rugged and remote sites.

Armed with a travel permit from the government and a shotgun...

Under the regime of President Porfirio Diaz and his "cientificos," Mexico had improved many of its roads and railways, and now offered many European conveniences. But President Diaz was not interested in the ruins of a "primitive" past. Looking across the ocean, the example of the "civilized" world of Europe inspired the government far more effectively. In a misplaced attempt to improve the place of Mexico in the world, Diaz pressed the Indians into effective serfdom. De Charney's attempts to convince the government that important discoveries of the past were still to be made fell on deaf ears. Money from foreigners interested in archaeology went to those with better scholarly reputations.

De Charney at first became enamored of the outlandish Atlantis theories of the Abbe Brasseur de Bourbourg. Later he developed a theory of his own. The Toltecs, he reasoned, had created a vast empire spanning Mexico and beyond, centered at the legendary capital Tolan and encompassing Teotihuacan, Taluca, Xochicalco, Cholula, and Chichén Itzá. He determined that Tolan was none other than the modern village of Tula, only a few dozen miles from Mexico City. He was later proven correct concerning Tula. His suppositions about the grandeur of the Toltec kingdom are harder to establish.

Armed with a travel permit from the government and a shotgun, De Charney braved the lawless environs surrounding Mexico City. Arriving at Tula, unmolested by the brigands that were so common and so bold during Diaz's administration, he saw only a few small and unpromising mounds to buoy his hopes of a grand discovery. Hiring local native diggers, de Charney soon uncovered large sculptured basalt cylinders over two meters long and nearly half a meter in diameter.

More fragments began to appear, including a large stone rattlesnake reminiscent of one he had found twenty years before at Chichén Itzá. As at Chichén Itzá, he also found a large stone ring, a fixture of the ball courts later to be found to be scattered over the whole of Mesoamerica. Such similarities convinced de Charney that the Toltecs had built both Chichén Itzá and Tula.

Not far from his first excavation, de Charney stripped the vegetation from a large mound to uncover a pyramid. Unfortunately actually opening the pyramid was impossible with the manpower available. The presence of the pyramid, however, convinced de Charney that he had found the capital of the Toltec Empire of which he dreamed.

Contemporary archaeologists and antiquarians were loath to accept his theory, refusing to believe that Tula and Tolan were one and the same. It was only in the 1930s that George C. Vailliant, excavating at Tula, confirmed de Charney's largely unsubstantiated theory of Toltec grandeur. Artifacts recovered by Vailliant were clearly of Toltec manufacture and dated to between the eighth and the thirteenth centuries of the Common Era.

Undeterred by the cool reception of the archaeological community to his assertions, de Charney began excavations at Teotihuacan, intent on establishing whether it had been part of the "Toltec Empire." This notion found even less support within the academic community.

An initial exploration of the site turned up innumerable shards of pottery, obsidian blades, ceramic idols and plaques, broken cups, and more. Upon beginning excavations near the mound known to the natives as "the Citadel," he uncovered fifteen similar mounds shrouded by flora.

Two and a half miles from the complex known as the Pyramid of the Moon, de Charney was led by his guides to a series of cavernous quarries, the source of the stone from which the pyramids beneath the mounds were constructed. There he found three narrow galleries which branched off at angles to different caves. One of these caves was a conglomeration of large halls supported by incredibly frail pillars. Another was a vast rotunda, filled with human bodies, attributed by his workers to be the victims of the bandits that frequented the area. Also according to the natives, the caves extended beneath the earth for over three miles to the Pyramid of the Sun and beyond. The entire countryside was said to be honey-combed with tunnels and caverns.

Another excavation not far from Teotihuacan at the contemporary village of San Juan revealed two dozen tombs of children and adults with grave goods and the preserved bodies of birds and dogs intended as food in the afterlife. The skeletons were so fragile that they collapsed into dust at de Charney's touch.

Despite his successes, he was denied funding for greater excavations from both the academic community and the Mexican government. When he petitioned the administration for permission to travel to Palenque, he came under suspicion as a potential spy. He proceeded under military escort to the site he had last visited twenty-two years earlier. It was much disintegrated and overgrown compared to the ruins he held in his memory. Here he made papier-mache molds of many of the sculptures and inscriptions.

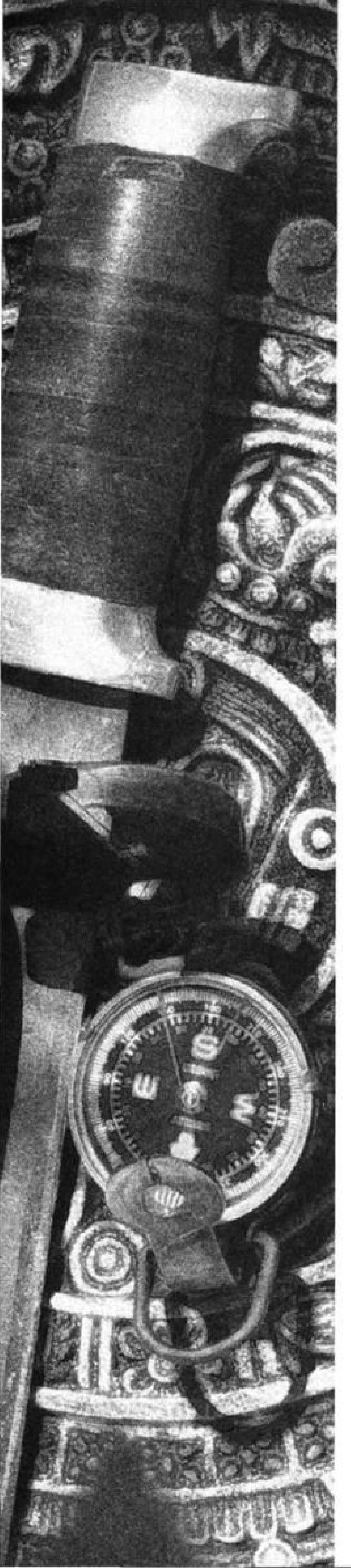
The Yucatán and Quintana Roo were extremely dangerous places to travel at this time. Many rebels against the Mexican government had taken up a guerrilla life in the rainforests of the highlands. From there they made regular forays against other areas, as well as terrorizing their own. De Charney decided to go on to Chichén Itzá and beyond. Still under military escort and suspicion, he visited in addition Izamal, Kabah, Uxmal, and Yaxchilan. The motifs of the friezes and reliefs that he saw reminded Charney of Hindu temples he had seen half a world away in the remote and haunted jungles of India.

Augustus le Plongeon

Born the Comte de Coquerville on the channel island of Jersey in 1826, Le Plongeon received an adequate education and eventually went on to take a medical degree in England. He was a mystic by nature, a master Mason steeped in the traditions of this secret order. He saw Masonic symbolism in Mayan art.

He published several books on his archaeological investigations in the New World. "Sacred Mysteries Among the Mayas and the Quiches" was published in 1886. Here he developed the idea that the Maya were an exceptionally advanced culture much older than was commonly accepted. In 1900, his controversial "Queen Mu and the Egyptian Sphinx" went further, stating that the civilization of the Maya was thousands of years older than was generally accepted, dating back at least twelve thousand years. He claimed that the Maya predated the civilization of Egypt and that the Old World cultures had advanced due to early contact with the more sophisticated Maya.

Le Plongeon became a naturalized American citizen. He wrote many articles and lectured before respected



scholarly groups for years at the Lowell Institute in Boston, where he died in 1908 at the age of 83.

William Niven

From 1910 to 1930, Niven worked as a mining engineer for a Mexican corporation. During that time he claimed to have made several controversial discoveries. He encountered a number of natives selling old terra cotta statues. The statues were intriguing enough and plentiful enough that Niven bribed one of the sellers to show him the location of the site where the statues might be found. He then discovered that, between Texcoco and Haluapantla, villages just north of Mexico City, there were hundred of pits dug into the sand and clay. This was the source of the building material that had been used for three hundred years for Mexico City. These pits covered an area of ten to twenty miles in the northwest corner of the Valley of Mexico. While exploring these pits, Niven came across layers of buried ruins lying as much as thirty feet below the surface. Each ruin layer was covered in a coating of sand pebbles and rocks, which Niven interpreted as evidence of tidal wash, perhaps from cataclysmic tidal waves. Based on the depth of the deepest ruins he estimated the age of the first of these cataclysms at fifty thousand years or more.

Four to six feet below the first pavement, Niven encountered another paved floor without pottery or any sign of habitation in evidence between the two layers. Beneath this second layer was a layer of ash two or three feet thick. Under the ashes lay traces of a large city, which appeared always at the same level in the over one hundred pits that Niven explored. Of course most of the structures were crushed flat with the weight of centuries lying over them, but in one pit Niven claims to have found an arched wooden door which had petrified intact. The walls of this house were held fast with a curious white cement which was harder than the stone that made up the walls of the structure. In one of the uncrushed rooms, about thirty feet square and full of volcanic ash, he found many artifacts and human bones which crumbled at his touch. Another room contained a goldsmith's workshop, complete with clay molds and figures turned to stone by antiquity and plated with iron in an unknown process. Frescoes lined the walls, preserved with some natural waxy coating. Beneath the floor was a tomb, three feet deep, lined with cement and containing seventy-five pieces of bone from the ancient occupant. An axeblade of some coppery metal was lodged in a large skull fragment. Also in the tomb, Niven found one hundred and twenty-five terra cotta figurines, idols, dishes, and other objects, some of which portrayed bearded figures.

In 1921, Niven was excavating at Santiago Ahuzoctla, five miles west of Mexico City, when he turned up the first of a series of pictographic tablets from a depth of twelve feet. As he widened his search to include other of the nearby pits he unearthed nine hundred and seventy-five such tablets over the next two years. Eventually, he claimed to have found over two thousand of them. He estimated their age at between twelve and fifty-thousand years.

When he showed tracings of several of the stones to a leading Mayanist of the day, Sylvanus G. Morley, he was told that they were of a type unknown. Niven then sent a tracing of every tablet he had brought up to his old friend and fellow mason, the antiquarian, James Churchward. Churchward had previously arrived at a theory of an advanced civilization that predated the Maya and Atlantis, and was situated somewhere in or near the Caribbean, the civilization of Mu.

Churchward recognized many of the symbols found in the tracings and confirmed Niven's suspicions that they could not be Mayan. The symbols, he said, were in fact familiar to him from his stay in a Tibetan monastery, where he had seen another set of similar tablets years before. These Tibetan tablets were, according to Churchward, called the Naacal tablets, and held much of the ancient sacred writings of the prehistoric civilization of Mu. Niven's tablets complimented the Naacal fragments and contained many of the secrets missing from them.

Niven died in 1937 in Austin, Texas. The whereabouts of his tablets and the many hundreds of other artifacts that he unearthed is not known. The American Museum of Natural History is said to have been given a collection of artifacts that were thought to have been purchased from Niven. They were never made available to the public or to scholars. They have never been put on display.

F.A. "Mike" Mitchell-Hedges

Explorer and atavist, sometime archaeologist, "Mike" Mitchell-Hedges could easily have been the model upon which Indiana Jones was based. A ruggedly handsome, athletic, and daring man, he travelled much of the globe searching for knowledge and adventure in roughly equal parts. He was the sort of man that attracted newspeople wherever he went, and he enjoyed their attention. Fond of extraordinary notions about the origins of various ruins and relics he had seen and investigated, he was very good copy for the reporters. He epitomized the adventurer-archaeologist of the period.

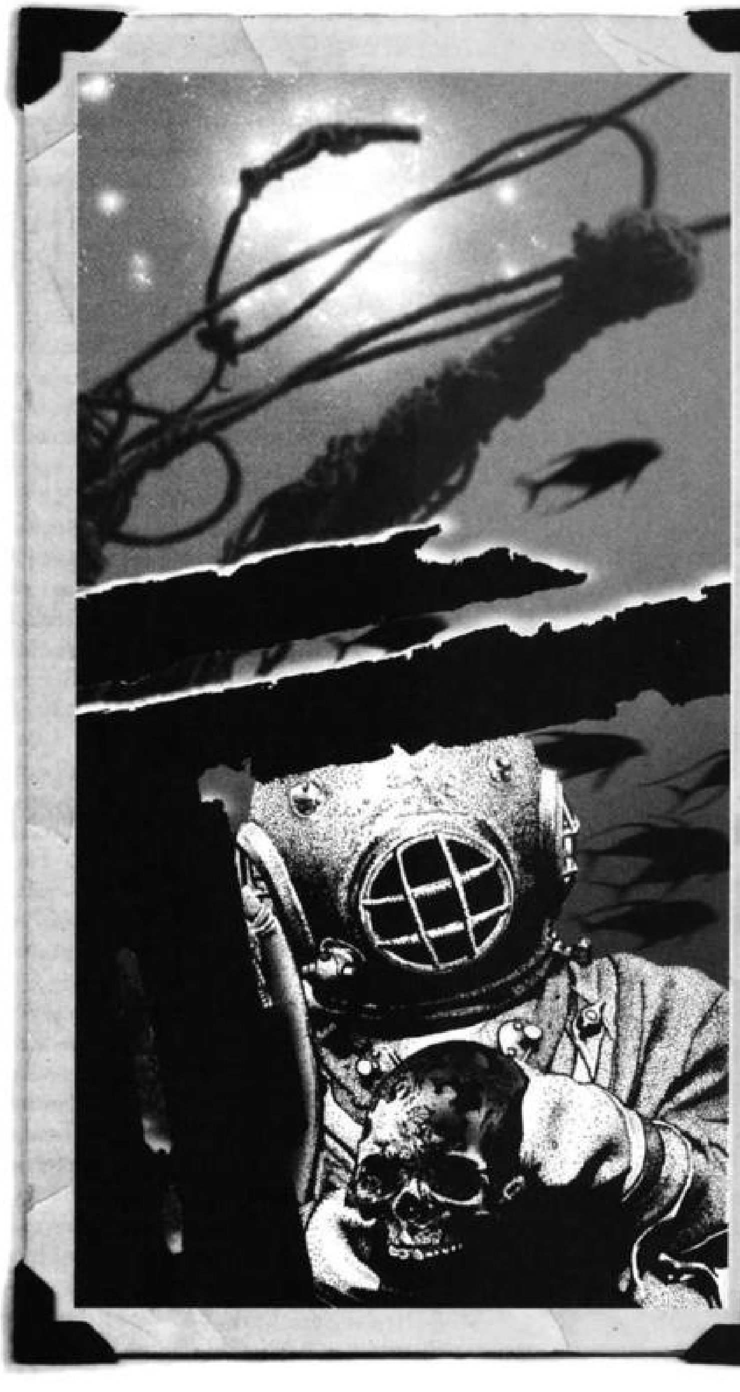
To hear him tell the tale... Mitchell-Hedges came to Canada and the United States in 1899, met with J.P. Morgan, won a fortune in a card game, and took off for Mexico. He was then captured and held prisoner by Pancho Villa, and later rode with Villa in Northern Mexico.

In 1927, while at Lubaantun with archaeologist Thomas Gann, Mitchell-Hedges' adoptive daughter, Anna, allegedly discovered a life-sized solid clear-crystal skull. In the intervening time, this skull has become perhaps the single most famous object attributed to a Maya site.

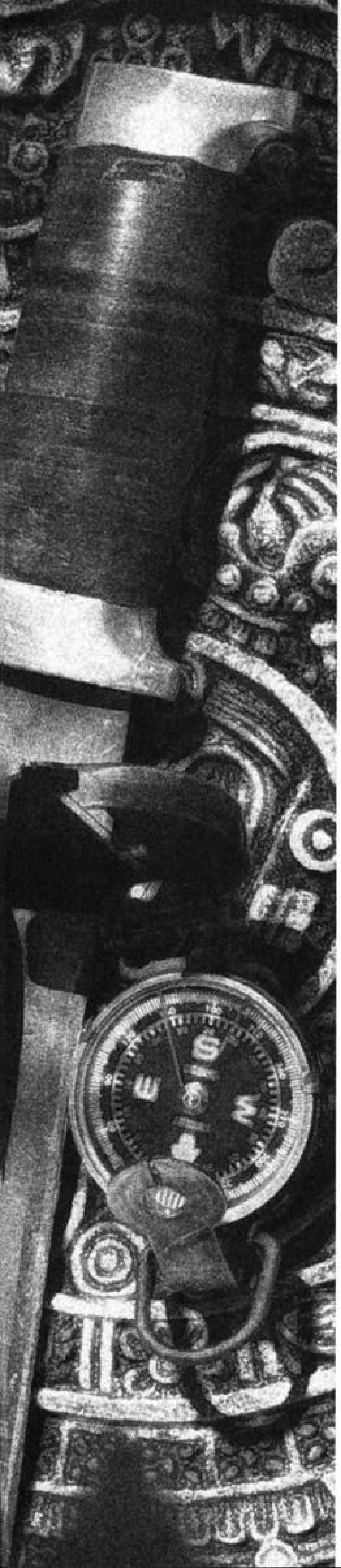
The crystal skull is one of several to have surfaced in the last century, attributed to such places as Tibet, China, and Mexico. It is said to have various mystical powers. Some claim it is a meditation focus for ancient, and possibly, modern magicians. Others say that it is a vast reservoir of psychic energy, derived from the numberless souls housed within it. A curse has also been attributed to it and to the other skulls, though the details of the curse are not specific. It may be significant that, while in possession of the skull, Mitchell-Hedges alleged that he was shot eight times and knifed thrice.

The origins of the artifact are also open to debate. Many doubt that Mitchell-Hedges actually found the skull at Lubaantun, claiming that the man's flair for theater made him secret a recently made object in the ancient site for the fame it would bring. Others say that it may be true that Mitchell-Hedges did plant the skull where his adopted daughter could find it, but only because the skull's true place of origin is even more extraordinary. It has been suggested that the skull is the only known relic of an extremely advanced civilization of the remote past, long before the rise of the Olmecs, or even the Egyptians.

This theory claims that the skull is a twelve thousand year old relic from the lost civilization of Atlantis and has been in the keeping of the Knights Templar for at least the last thousand years. In the last century, it came into the possession of an inner circle of the Masons who, for an unknown reason, gave the skull to one of its own, Mitchell-Hedges. Mitchell-Hedges then introduced the skull to the world at Lubaantun.



Another similar theory has the Templars sending the skull to the New World, of which they had long been



aware, around the time of the demise of their order in 1314 at the hands of the Catholic Church. Centuries later, the Masons sent Mitchell-Hedges to retrieve the skull. As wild as these assertions may seem, other, stranger ones have been put forward in the years following Mitchell-Hedges death in 1959.

The following is an excerpt from the New York American newspaper of 1935. If, as Keeper, you want to use this as a handout, just come up with a headline that you think will catch the attention of your investigators. The headlines articles from the 1935 series, which you can reuse, are "Atlantis was No Myth but the Cradle of the American Races Declares Hedges," and "Explorer Hedges Finds pre-Mayan City Buried Beneath the Caribbean Sea."

> Upon the island of Bonaca he [Mitchell-Hedges] discovered an eight-hundred-yard mound wall enclosure, the top of which was paved with flat stones. In this place of worship he discovered two immense monoliths which, he noted, were similar to stone formations at Stonehenge. The stones measured almost seven feet in height and two and half feet through the base.
>
> He also unearthed well-proportioned vases, objects of copper and bronze, and found upon a hilltop a huge hewn stone with strange markings upon it. There was no known mechanism that could have moved it to this remote pinnacle.
>
> In hastily abandoned chambers, among the awe-inspiring evidence of nature's upheaval, he discovered oddly carved stones and weird figurines of grotesque animals and reptiles, which, he surmised, might once have roamed the earth. But out of all these artifacts not one had any relation to the culture of the Maya, Aztec, Toltec, or to other cultures of the area.
>
> On the slope that was once terraced downward to the sea he found a specimen in the form of an animal. It was about four inches long and pierced with round holes. Another similar object was also found in the form of a man. It appeared at first to be a solid piece of stone but upon closer examination he found it packed with dirt. Subsequent cleaning proved it to be a simple wind instrument - perhaps the original ocarina.
>
> It must have been an eerie experience to experiment with those instruments - unplayed for centuries.
>
> The authenticity of the Mitchell-Hedges finds received wide endorsement. George C. Heye, Director of the Heye Foundation at the Museum of the American Indian in New York, wrote, "Your own observations, and the United States Government surveys in Nicaragua, prove conclusively that at some remote period a tremendous earth movement of cataclysmic force must have taken place in that part of the world... and that your excavations have actually unearthed the cultural artifacts of a prehistoric people that existed prior to the great earth movement... your discoveries open up an entirely new vista in regard to the ancient civilizations of the American continent."
>
> (*New York American*, February 10, 1935).

That there is some secret concerning the skull seems sure. Certainly Mitchell-Hedges would not reveal anything about its origins, and would not confirm that he had found it at Lubaantun. Years after the discovery, he had occasion to write "We took with us also the sinister Skull of Doom of which much has been written. How it came into possession I have reason for not revealing.

"The Skull of Doom is made of pure rock crystal and according to scientists it must have taken over 150 years, generation after generation working all the days of their lives, patiently rubbing down with sand an immense block of rock crystal until finally the perfect Skull emerged.

"It is at least 3,600 years old and according to legend was used by the High Priest of the Maya when performing esoteric rites. It is said that when he willed death with the help of the skull, death invariably followed. It has been described as the embodiment of all evil. I do not wish to try and explain this phenomena."

Eventually Mitchell-Hedges travelled south into Central America. With his girlfriend, the wealthy and married, Lady Richmond Brown, he sailed the Caribbean, exploring the Bay Islands off Honduras, the San Blas Islands off Panama, and the area around Jamaica.

While sailing the Caribbean in the 1930s, Mitchell-Hedges discovered an area filled with submerged ruins. Just opposite the port of La Ceiba are the Bay Islands of Roatan, Utila, Barbareta, and Guanaja (called Bonacca by the English). Mitchell-Hedges spent many months excavating throughout the area from 1930-35.

A series of articles written for the *New York American* newspaper in 1935, records that Mitchell-Hedges retrieved many ancient remnants from the sea bottom and excavated twenty-one sites in the five tiny islands. He noted that in some cases the stone faces were anthropologically similar to the Central American Indian while others were crafted with the high cheekbones and aquiline nose of the North American Indian.

Photographs accompanied some of the articles. An assortment of greenish pottery vases and figurines which display facial features uncharacteristic of the Mesoamerican were pictured, as well as what appears to be a head of petrified wood that was once the top of a chief's staff. Mitchell-Hedges himself was convinced that he had found evidence of the lost civilization of Atlantis.

The Feathered Serpent

Feathered Serpent is an enigmatic deity that was worshipped by both the Maya and the Aztecs, possibly by the Toltecs, and by some beyond the bounds of Mesoamerica. Though the names by which he was known changed from people to people and age to age, he was known as far north as northern Mexico and as far south as central South America. The attributes, abilities, and modes of worship were remarkable similar throughout this area. The singular nature of the deity is also of interest and has inspired a great deal of comment from scholars of Mesoamerican culture as well as interested amateurs. Many theories as to the origins of the Feathered Serpent myth have been proposed.

Names of the Feathered Serpent by various cultures or locales:

Kukulcán - Maya
Quetzalcóatl - Aztec
Votan - Chiapas
Wixepechoca - Oaxaca
Zamna - Yucatán
Gucumatz - Guatemala
Viracocha - Peru
Bochica - Columbia
Sume, Paya Tome - Brazil

Bishop Diego de Landa had this to say of the Feathered Serpent in the mid-sixteenth century:

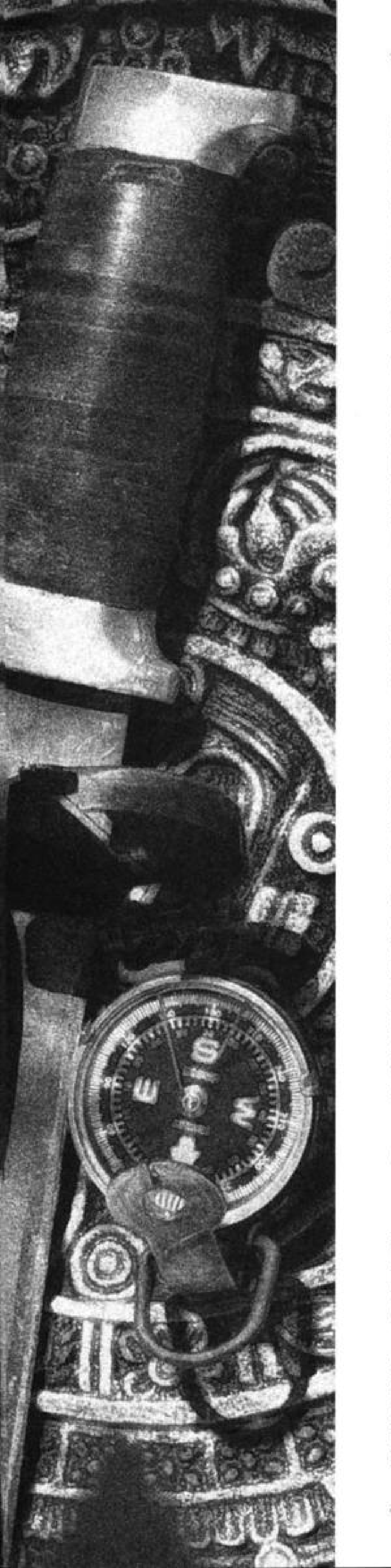
"it is believed among the Indians that with the Itzas who occupied Chichén Itzá, there reigned a great Lord Kukulcán . . . they say that he arrived from the west . . . he was regarded in Mexico as one of their gods and called Quetzalcóatl; and they also considered him a god in Yucatán on account of him being a just statesman."

To the Aztecs, the Feathered Serpent was called Quetzalcóatl. The Aztecs believed that the Feathered Serpent once had ruled the Toltecs as the ancient, wise monarch of legend, Topiltzin. Topiltzin-Quetzalcóatl was the son of Mixcoatl, the first king of the Toltecs and the founder of Tula. Under Mixcoatl's care the city prospered but it reached its height under the rule of his son. Topiltzin encouraged architecture, and the Toltecs perfected the art of building. They erected palaces and temples with colonnaded halls filled with frescoes, raised tall pyramids, and excavated great ball-courts. Topiltzin encouraged agriculture and the Toltecs developed improved strains of maize, squash, and cotton. He encouraged metalwork, and the people created fine gold and silver objects. Developments in pottery, weaving, featherworking, and writing also occurred during his reign.

Finally, Topiltzin declared that the practice of human sacrifice should be abolished. But many of the people were afraid of the consequences of such a measure. Others simply refused to give it up. Among these were the priests of the god of night, Tezcatlipoca, Smoking Mirror. The priests rallied the traditionalists among the populace to their cause and drove the Feathered Serpent out of Tula. Where he went is not known, though Maya legends tell of Kukulcán, their name for the Feathered Serpent, arriving among them in a boat from the east.

The Aztecs had a tradition that held that Quetzalcóatl, before he was driven out, swore he would return, and that before him would return men like him, fair-skinned and bearded. It was this legend that paralyzed the Aztecs when they were faced with the invading conquistadors under Cortés. For his part, Cortés learned early in his campaign that he could capitalize on the Aztecs confusion over his identity.

Most other legends record the actions of the Feathered Serpent as a god in the otherworld. Here Quetzalcóatl and Tezcatlipoca were eternal rivals. The Feathered Serpent was always foiling some cruel scheme of Tezcatlipoca, who was an enemy of human beings. In one such story Quetzalcóatl had intercourse with his sister after having been made drunk by Tezcatlipoca. On waking, Quetzalcóatl felt so guilty that he immediately made a fire and cast himself upon it. The ashes turned into birds that carried his heart to the heavens, where it became the planet Venus, brightest object in the evening sky.



Once, Feathered Serpent and Smoking Mirror worked together to spread the body of Hungry Woman over the Ocean. They were rude and rough with her and caused her many injuries. Hoping to soothe her, the other gods came and made forests and valleys, flowers and other pleasant features for her. But the earth said she would not be satisfied until she were given blood sacrifice. Ever since, the earth hungers for human hearts and wants to be watered in human blood.

Later, when the gods had made the Second Sun, Tezcatlipoca stole it to wear at his belt when he strode through the sky. Quetzalcóatl followed him and smote him with a staff. As Tezcatlipoca fell to the earth, he transformed into the flesh-tearing, ever-hungry jaguar who ate the giants in darkness.

Among the Maya, the Feathered Serpent was known as Kukulcán (though Gucumatz was also called the Feathered Serpent - whether they are one and the same is not clear). The Maya believed that he lived among them in the distant past and taught them many of the arts of civilization and the skills of life. When he was a human he was fair-skinned, bearded, and possibly fair-haired. As he is said to have done by the Aztecs, he prophesized before his departure that he would return again to the Maya. He also said that before he returned, pale-skinned men would come to the Maya and conquer them. Kukulcán did not die, but either vanished into the earth, sailed away, or was consumed by fire, depending on the legend.

The figure of the Feathered Serpent has inspired a great deal of speculation in scholars and amateurs alike as to the origins of this unusual figure. A belief put forward by many interested parties is that Quetzalcóatl is in actuality from the Old World, a seafarer from one of the ancient civilizations of Europe or the Near East. This was the prevailing opinion for most of the nineteenth century and still received considerable scholarly respect in the early years of the twentieth.

Many have suggested various historical identities for the Feathered Serpent. St. Brendan the Navigator, was a seventh century Irish monk who set off in a small boat to carry the word of God to wherever God willed. The little hide-covered boat was carried over the Atlantic and landed in the New World where he tried to bring the word of Christ to the Maya. Others have postulated that the New World was the destination of Jesus after the miraculous resurrection; that he came among the heathens of Mesoamerica to teach them peace.

Another theory has the "White God" of the Mesoamericans coming from the ancient Mediterranean, from which he brought the early pictographic script of Crete (called Linear A by scholars) to the Maya. This semi-pictographic writing system dates to the second millennium B.C.E. and defies translation, but contributed many of its signs, modified in form and meaning, to the later and understood Linear B. According to this theory, the coming of the "White God" to the New World would have been in the middle of the second millennium B.C.E. Proponents of this theory note similarities, not only between certain signs used in a number of ancient Mesoamerican scripts with some in Linear A, but also similarities in ornamentation, relief-work, and headdresses with aspects of frescoes found in the palace of Knossos on Crete.

The Hidden World

Collected here are a number of creatures that populated the imaginations and nightmares of ancient and often more modern Mesoamericans. The bogeymen and other scary things in the Mesoamerican night are similar to those that haunt the imaginations of people elsewhere, the idea here is to give Keepers enough to know what sorts of things are specific to this part of the world.

How you use this section is up to you, but here is an example. In the last several years, the "chupacabras" of Central America, often referred to the "goat-sucking demon" in English, has been reported in newspapers worldwide. If you wanted to use this phenomenon in a game, you are going to be working against the knowledge of your players and the indifference that so much attention will have brought with it. One way to do that is to tie the "chupacabras," a phenomenon that is not recorded prior to the last decade to something from the distant Mesoamerican past. Perhaps "chupacabras" sightings are actually the work of Mesoamerican gnomes, who are themselves deformed and insanely corrupted Alux (the Mayan "little people"). The gnomes have been further debased by some recent occurrence which has driven to acts they previously had avoided. The investigators may stumble on to an entire alien and twisted culture rather than simply hunting down an unintelligent predator, supernatural or otherwise.

Giants - These huge human-like creatures are usually only found in the ancient stories of the gods. The giants were the people of the Second Sun, preyed upon by the jaguars that destroyed that age. But not all the giants were slain. Among the Popoluca near Vera Cruz, man-eating giants are still thought to exist.

Gnomes - Similar to rain dwarves as inhabitants of the earth, gnomes are feared as kidnappers. They often operate in gangs, as they are individually weak. They are small and naked with huge ears and backward feet.

Man-eating birds - Many tales exist of the Sikla birds, huge eagle-like creatures that carry away man, woman, or child to eat in their eyries. Stories of huge devil-birds are common among most of the native peoples of North and Central America. Reports have occurred in recent times in the American southwest as well as further north.

Ogres - These usually appear as old women, sometimes very large, with big ears or even a single large ear. Among the Aztecs, the tzitzimitl were skeleton-like ogresses who lived in the sky and waited to pounce upon people during solar eclipses and at the end of the world.

Sorcerers - Often the term "Nagual" is used to refer to sorcerers, though the word actually means "shapeshifter." The Nahuatl word for sorcerer was "tlacatecolotl" or "human owl." These creatures were in some way related to the god Tezcatlipoca, who could assume this form as well.

Temptresses - these are irresistibly beautiful women who destroy men's minds or cause insanity through carnal contact. Often called "Xtabay" (pronounced "shta-bye").

Water Serpents - inhabitants of lakes, rivers, and ponds, these occasionally horned serpents caused floods and preyed upon humans who came too near.

Weeping Woman - Similar to the Celtic banshee, Weeping Woman is the agency of the disembodied cry in the night. She is the mother crying soullessly for her lost child or the heartsore maid bemoaning her slaughtered husband. Many tales of ghostly wails and cries are credited to Weeping Woman.

The Onza - Stories of the Onza, referred to as Ciutlamiztli by the Aztecs, have abounded for centuries in the remote and unforgiving Sierra Madre Occidental Mountain range in northwest Mexico.

To the Aztecs, Cuitlamiztli was definitely distinct from the puma or the jaguar, both well known and highly feared big cats in pre-Columbian times and well represented in period art. Montezuma II, emperor of the Aztecs during the Spanish conquest had a great menagerie, which he showed the Spanish. Bernal Diaz del Castillo wrote of his visit that the zoo contained "...tigers and lions of two kinds, one of which resembled a wolf."

Later settlers of northwest Mexico reported occasional sightings of a wolflike cat with long ears, a lean body and long, thin legs.They called it onza, after the Latin "uncia," the African cheetah. The settlers also warned of its ferocity far greater than that of the cautious puma. Father Johann Jakob Baegert, who lived among the Guaricura Indians in Baja California in the middle of the eighteenth century, wrote "one onza attacked a fourteen year old boy in broad daylight and practically in full view of all the people; a few years ago another killed the strongest and most respected soldier in the area."

But the reports of the onza were given no credence beyond northern Mexico until the 1930s, when two experienced mountaineers and hunters, Dale and Clell Lee heard of the onza as they were working in the mountains of Sonora.

Some time later they were guiding a banker in search of jaguar. There they treed and shot a strange-looking cat which they did not recognize from their previous experience. They measured and skinned the animal and their client kept the skull and skin. When the brothers reported the incident to American zoologists they were publicly scorned. What became the skin and skull is not known.

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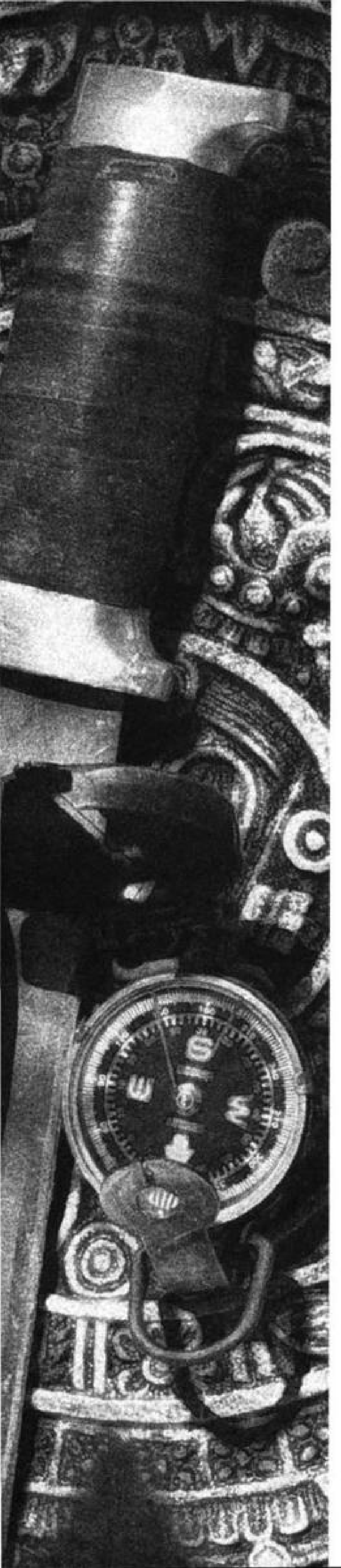
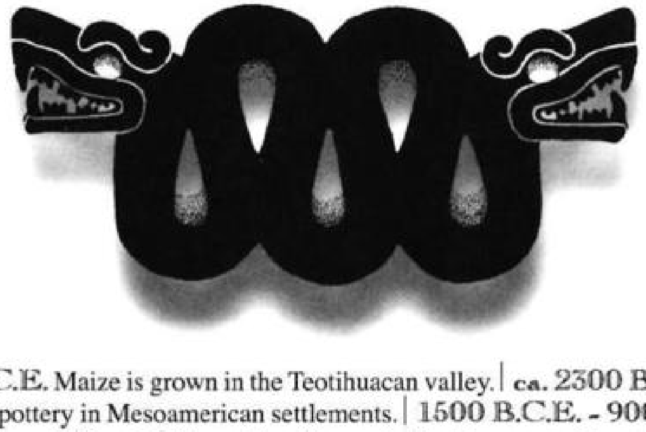


Timeline of Mesoamerica



ca. 5000 B.C.E. Maize is grown in the Teotihuacan valley. | **ca. 2300 B.C.E.** First appearance of pottery in Mesoamerican settlements. | **1500 B.C.E. - 900 B.C.E. - Early Preclassic Period** Rise of the Olmec civilization, progenitor culture for all Mesoamerican cultures that came after. Olmec territory centered in the swampy lowlands of Southern Vera Cruz and highland Guerrero. | **900 B.C.E. - 300 B.C.E. - Middle Pre-Classical Period** Olmec statuary and imagery has become popular from Costa Rica to the Valley of Mexico. Large population centers begin to develop in numerous regions, alongside the concepts of kingship and a stratified society. What would become the Mayan culture begins to appear. | **ca. 500 B.C.E.** Earliest ball courts; originated by the Olmecs, but prevalent in every Mesoamerican culture. | **ca. 400 B.C.E.** The Olmecs meet a sudden and mysterious end. The Zapotec city of Monte Alban is begun. | **300 B.C.E. - 300 C.E. Early Mayan Period** Earliest Maya site at Uaxactún. Further Olmec-influenced settlements at Izapa, Abaj Takalik, El Baúl, and Kaminaljuyú. Ceremonial centers like Uaxactún also built at Tikal, and El Mirador in the South Lowlands. | **100 B.C.E.** Rise of the Zapotecs at Monte Alban. | **150 C.E.** Rise of the great city of Teotihuacan. | **300 - 800** The Classical Mayan Period, the golden age of Maya civilization, architecture, art and science. The great cities of Copán, Quiriguá, Naranjo, Piedras Negras, Uxmal, Cobá, and Chichén Itzá flourish. | **700** Failure of the Zapotec city of Monte Alban. Survivors resettle at Mitla, which grows in power. | **750** Fall of Teotihuacan to a mysterious power. The city is largely razed and not inhabited past this point. | **800 - 900** The Mayan culture in the south lowlands collapses. Cities here fall into ruin and disuse for unknown reason. | **ca. 850** The great Nahua (one tribe of which would later come to be known as the Aztecs) invasions from the north into central Mexico and the Valley of Mexico. | **Late 10th C.** Toltecs invade the Yucatán and take over Chichén Itzá. Here a Maya/Toltec hybrid culture arises. | **968-985** The legendary reign of the Toltec king, Topiltzin Quetzalcóatl in Tula. His death marks the beginning of the dispersion of the Toltecs throughout the rest of Mexico. | **1000 - 1200** Toltecs raise a martial empire that may have been the template for the Aztec model. | **1100** The Nahua dominate the central Mexican plateau. Mexican dynasties now rule over most of the previously Mayan cities in the north. The Nahua tribe that became the Aztecs, at this time still live a semi-nomadic existence in northern Mexico. | **1200** Hybrid culture of Chichén Itzá fall into ruins. | **1200 - 1500** The new capital of the late Maya is at Mayapán. The civilization of the Maya shows definite signs of decline. | **1325** The Aztecs found Tenochtitlan on a site ordained by an ancient prophecy. | **1326** Accession of Acamapichtli, founder of the Aztec dynasty. | **1428** Victory of Tenochtitlan over the rival city Azcapotalco. The Aztecs now rule the entire Basin of Mexico. | **1429** The formation of the triple Alliance of Tenochtitlan, Texcoco, and Tlacopan, with Tenochtitlan as the most powerful ally. Most of Mexico is now either under Aztec power or open to the attacks of the Alliance. | **1450-1** Natural calamities produce a long and disastrous famine in central Mexico. | **1468** Axayacatl rules the Aztec and pursues aggressively expansionist policies. | **1469** Occupation of the Totonac region on the gulf coast of Mexico. | **1478** Tarascans are attacked but force back the

Aztecs. The Tarascans tenaciously cling to independence up to the arrival of the Spanish. | **1486** Ahuitzotl, seventh Aztec sovereign, expands the Great Temple at Tenochtitlan, and inaugurates it with the sacrifice of 20,000 prisoners of war. | **1487-8** The beginning of the conquest of Huaxteca, Guerrero, and Oaxaca by the Aztecs. | **1492** Columbus makes landfall in the Bahamas. | **1496** Conquest of Tehuantepec by the Aztecs. | **1500** Conquest of Soconusco by the Aztecs. | **1502** Motechizoma II (more commonly known as Montezuma) succeeds Ahuitzotl as king of the Aztecs. Aztec rivalry with the Tlaxalans becomes bitter. | **1511** Spanish shipwreck survivors found by the Maya. Most are sacrificed but two survive. | **1517** First reconnaissance by Hernán Cortés of the Mexican coast. | **1517 - 41** The Spanish Conquest of Guatemala and the Yucatán. Over two decades of warfare, forcing the Spanish to defeat the smaller population centers of the Maya and their independent kings one by one. | **1519** Cortés lands at the modern site of Vera Cruz from Cuba (22 April); is met by the Spanish survivors of the shipwreck of 1511 who have a good understanding of the ways of the Mesoamerican peoples; marches on Mexico (August); enters Tlaxcalan (23 September); destroys Cholula upon witnessing a mass sacrifice in his honor (18 October); enters Tenochtitlan (8 November), where he rapidly takes control, holding Motechizoma hostage. | **30 June 1520** The night of the "*Noche Triste*." The rout of the Spaniards from Tenochtitlan by the enraged Aztecs. Many Conquistadors are slain, Motechizoma is rescued, Cortés is nearly killed. | **1521** Cortés rallies allies and besieges Tenochtitlan, which falls on 13 August. Half or more of the cities population is dead from disease or slaughter. The Aztec Empire becomes New Spain with Hernán Cortés as Captain General. | **ca. 1550** The *Popol Vuh*, the Quiche Maya text which records the Maya creation myth in both Spanish and transliterated Mayan is written down. | **1760 - 1764** An intense period of repeated rebellion by the Maya against their Spanish overlords in South Mexico, Guatemala, and the Honduras. | **1765** King Charles III of Spain sends a delegate to assess the troubled situation in Greater Spain. | **1773** Major earthquake in the Cuchumatanes portion of the Sierra Madres in Guatemala. | **1810-21** Mexican War of Independence. | **1810-11** First popular revolts in Mexico - led by priests Miguel Hidalgo and Jose Maria Morales. | **1821** Mesoamerica emerges free of Spanish rule and is briefly united as the United Provinces of Central America. | **1823** Central America breaks from Mexico after an attempt by Mexico to gain ascendancy in the Union and establish the rest of Central America as colonies. | **1824** Beginning of the Mexican Republic, generally simply called Mexico, after the failure of the Mexican Empire. | **1833-35** Santa Anna establishes himself in a series of dictatorships fraught with civil war. | **1836** Texas War of Independence. | **1845-48** Mexican-American War - results in the loss by Mexico of the territories that came to be New Mexico, Colorado, California, Arizona, and Texas to the United States. | **1837** Rebellion of Conservative Rafael Carvera against the Liberal dominated United Provinces of Central America. | **1839** Central America splits into a host of small states (Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica) despite occasional attempts to unite two or more elements. | **1847** War of the Castes in Yucatán. | **1848** Counterrevolution in the War of the Castes. | **1861** Mexican liberals defeat the conservatives. Liberal leader Juarez, suspends repayment of foreign debt and provokes French intervention. | **1862** French occupation to support their candidate, Emperor Maximilian, who is defeated by the troops of Juarez and shot in 1867. | **1867** In the Tzotzil town of Chamula, a young woman comes forward with three stones she said had fallen from the sky. Clay figurines were added to the stones. The woman claims that she gave birth to the figurines and that she is the Mother of God. | **1868** Under the direction of native leader, Pedro Dias Cuzcat, a ten-year old boy is nailed to a cross to provide the native people with their own Christ. Alarmed government authorities intervene, provoking the Cuzcat Rebellion. | **1870** The Cuzcat rebellion is put down. | **1867-76** Period of Mexican reform, modernization, and secularization. | **1873-85** Rufino Barrio is dictator of Guatemala. | **1876-1911** Porfirio Diaz governs Mexico, retaining the presidency through 6 closed elections. | **1898** Spanish-American War. | **1878-1920** Pancho Villa, Mexican Revolutionary, is active. | **1910-20** Mexican Revolution. | **1917** Major earthquake in the Cuchumatanes portion of the Sierra Madres in Guatemala. | **1919** Emiliano Zapata, peasant revolutionary hero, is assassinated. | **1923** Three years after officially retiring, Pancho Villa is assassinated. | **1927** War of the Custeros in Mexico - popular reaction to the anti-religious policies of the Mexican Revolution. | **1929** The effects of the Depression hit Latin America as the flow of American capital nearly halts and prices for raw materials plummet. | **1930** The rise of numerous populist movements in retaliation against the liberals in nearly all Latin American countries. | **1931** A hurricane of incredible power virtually destroyed Belize City, killing ten percent of the capital's 15,000 people and many more outside the city itself. | **1938** Gambling made illegal in Mexico. | **1934-40** Lazaro Cardenas, reformist president of Mexico.

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CALENDRICS of the Mesoamerican Ancients

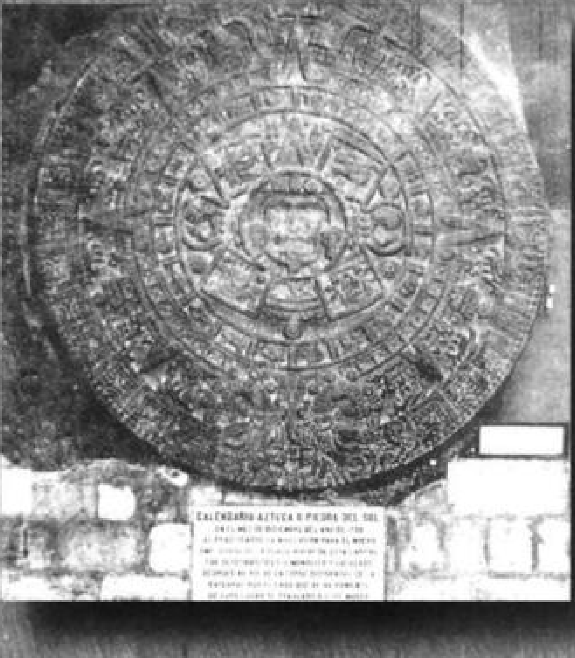
Calendar technology of the ancient Mesoamericans was -- and still is -- one the most impressive and advanced systems of timekeeping ever developed. Compared to its contemporaries of the ancient world, such as the flawed and awkward calendric systems of the Islamic and Roman Julian calendars, or the decrepit and problematic systems of the Hebrew and Chinese calendars, the Mesoamerican calendar was progressive and sophisticated, monumentally detailed in its astronomical and seasonal data, and was arguably the most accurate, comprehensive and elaborate chronologic reckonings ever devised, even by today's modern, computerized standards.

The Mesoamerican calendar system was religious in nature. Its mechanics were deeply rooted in Mesoamerican theology, cosmology, folklore and public ceremony, and affected nearly every aspect of daily life in the Pre-Columbian world. Indeed, calendar predictions and numerous celestial recordings dictated not only domestic concerns -- the season for planting crops and the season for harvesting, the correct days for citizens to conduct business dealings and shamans to conduct counsel, the recommended days for funerals and weddings, when to carry water and when to construct weapons, when to avoid crossroads and the *cihuateteo* (ghosts) which haunted them, or when to prepare meals without fires in order to discourage flesh-eating demons -- but also dictated political concerns: the felicitous days for commemorations and coronations, or when and where a Mesoamerican army would fight, and against which enemy, according to the respective rising and setting of the morning star and evening star, the transits of Venus and the conjunctions of Mars, Saturn, and Jupiter.

The calendar served many generations of Maya, Aztec, Toltec, Mixtec, Zapotec, even the warlike Carib and Jivaro, each nation adopting the calendar system as their own and embellishing its symbolic and glyphic appearance with unique cultural styles and flavours, elaborations which characterized an individual ethnic identity and distinguished it from all others but which still incorporated the calendar's venerated, underlying, fundamental astronomical and mathematical processes at its core. Yet, without exception, each of these cultures credited an earlier, more enlightened civilization for the calendar's original creation. Fables among Guatemala's Quiche Indian describe timekeeping technology as having come from a "divine messenger"; a white, bearded hierophant called *Viarococha* (i.e., another of the legion guises of Nyarlathotep [author]) who served the Feathered Serpent, Quetzalcoatl (i.e., the Dæmon Sultan, Azathoth [author]) and whom also instructed the early Middle Americans in the cultivation of maize, the construction of temples and pyramids, astronomy, writing, warfare, and ritual bloodletting. Even the legendary Olmec, whose remote origins continue to mystify modern-day academia, claimed to have inherited the calendar from a previous, illuminated society, and to this day, archæologists and historians cannot say definitively when, where, or by whom the great Mesoamerican calendar system was first developed.

In application, the Mesoamerican calendric system is actually a set of three calendars operating in parallel. The first two primary calendars are called the the *Tzolkin* and *Haab*. The Tzolkin and Haab are often confused with the misnomered "Aztec Calendar Stone," but the *Piedra del Sol*, or Sun Stone, is not a calendar at all. Popularized on T-shirts, handbags, posters, restaurant menus, CD covers, etceteras, the famed Sun

The famous Maya observatory at Chichén Itzá



The Piedra del Sol: the "Aztec Sun Stone" or "Aztec Calendar Stone."

Stone is a relic unearthed from the main plaza of Tenochtitlan by construction workers who stumbled upon it in 1790 during repairs to a local cathedral, and though its intricate design and megalithic workmanship is striking, it is merely a religious artifact, a Mesoamerican ideological icon much like the Christian Cross, the Jewish Star of David or the lotus-positoned Asian Buddha. Now on permanent display at the *Museo Nacional de Antropologia* in Mexico City, the Sun Stone is a 24-ton, 12-foot diameter disc of black basalt engraved with a formal visual representation of Mesoamerican cosmology: a portrayal of Earth and Man and their relationship to Time and the Heavens, the respective ruling lords of Night, Day, Wind, Rain, War, Blood, Life, Death, as well as the Four Great Worlds or Four Suns, the religious premise upon which the ancient Mexica measured time. The conjunctive calendars of the Tzolkin and the Haab, conversely, are not symbolic icons but true working calendars. These dual calendric systems are often depicted in textbook literature as two interconnecting wheels or cogs (see page 67) joined together like toothed gears in a machine, and though this mechanized depiction diminishes the complex arithmetical elegance of ancient Mesoamerican timekeeping, it nonetheless is an effective if not simplistic illustration of the calendars' chronologic relationship to one another and suffices for

this brief essay.

The Tzolkin is a 260-day ceremonial calendar. The name is based on present-day Yucatec Mayan and means roughly "count of days," the actual Pre-Columbian name -- like most others -- having been lost to antiquity. This primary "cog" is composed of 20 day glyphs or "Name Days" which runs successively together with a secondary "counter cog" that runs from the number 1 up to 13, the glyphs of the primary cog and the numbers of the secondary cog cycling alternately together to create 260 unique glyph/number days and a complete 260-day sequence.

The Haab is a 365-day civil calendar and will be familiar to modern-day users of the Christian Calendar: its arithmetical, linear reckoning of a single solar year is similar to Gregorian or Contemporary reckoning and the Western "unbroken beeline" perception of time and chronologic progression. This primary cog functions much like the Tzolkin though without a secondary counter cog, its first 360 days being divided into 18 successive months of 20 days each. The remaining 5 days follow as an abbreviated 19th month, *Uayeb*, a period which was viewed as evil or unlucky, the ancients staying close to home and avoiding friends and family, bathing and open water on these days.

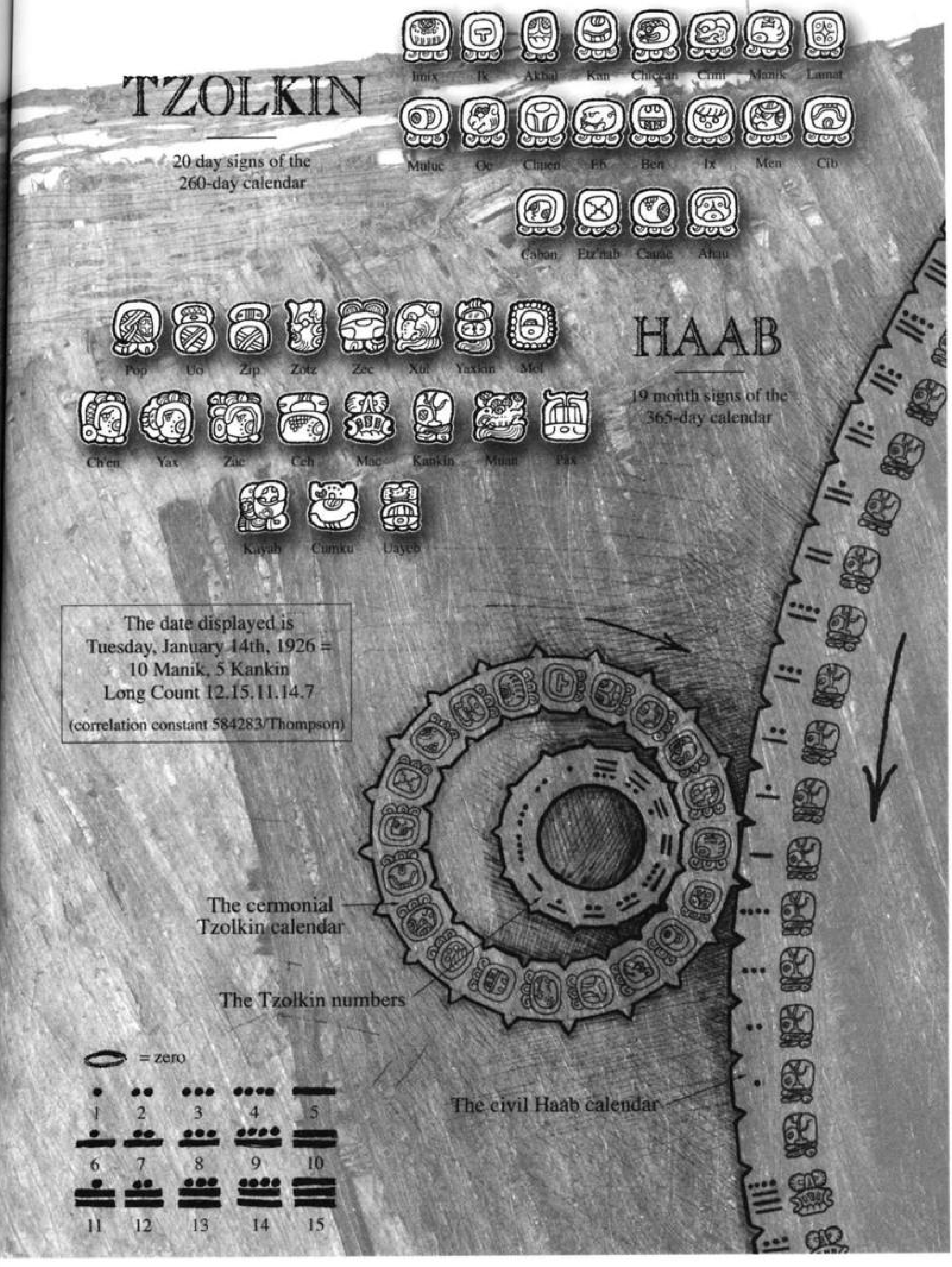
Combined together, the Tzolkin and Haab is a concerted system called the Calendar Round, a synchronized chronologic cycle equaling 52 Haabs which is roughly the equivalent of average life expectancy for the times. For the general public, the Calendar Round identified most dates to satisfaction: "My clan sacrifices at the cenote on Eight *Cauac*, in memory of my great grandfather's birth."; "My mother married in the fourth *keh* of her 16th haab." Written in Mayan numerals and emblems, a typical date for the Calendar Round appears with the Tzolkin numbered day glyph followed by the Haab numbered month glyph, for example:

Tuesday, January 14th, 1926 = **10 *Manik*, 5 *Kankin***
(correlation constant 584283/Thompson)

As the Calendar Round does not identify years per se, only months and days, the Mesoamerican religious elite therefore employed a non-repeating, vigesimal calendar to express dates in the very remote past -- and future. This system, a comprehensive, era-based reckoning which we call the "Long Count" appears universally on monument stelae and temple shrines throughout Mexico and Central America. The Long Count is a tally. Using the *baktun* as its base component, it calculates 13 consecutive *baktuns* for a grand total 1,872,000 days -- approximately 5,135 years -- which the Maya designated as one Great Cycle. Each *baktun* consisted of descending units: 20 *katun*; 20 *tun*, the Mayan word for "stone"; 18 *uinic* or *uinal*, the Maya month unit named after their word for "human being"; and 20 *kin*, the Mayan word for day. Written out, a date in the Long Counts appears as a place-notation of five numbers:

Tuesday, January 14th, 1926 = **12.15.11.14.7**
(correlation constant 584283/Thompson)

On the Gregorian Calendar, the Mesoamerican day zero of the current Long Count corresponds to August 11th, 3114 BCE: the beginning of the fifth world of Man and the Fifth Sun as described among Aztec creation myths. And while this assignment of a summer's day five thousand years ago may seem arbitrary to orthodox academics, Mythos scholars will recognize the date from *Azif* as the inauguration date of "The Age of the Ten Thousand Tongues," when "all terrestrial power is offered up to the Faceless Lord" (Nyarlathotep once again) -- the beginning of earth's last Great Cycle which the Mad Arab noted ends on the winter solstice of 2012 A.D., or 13.0.0.0.0.0 of the Mesoamerican Long Count.



TZOLKIN

20 day signs of the
260-day calendar

Imix
Ik
Akbal
Kan
Chicchan
Cimi
Manik
Lamat
Muluc
Oc
Chuen
Eb
Ben
Ix
Men
Cib
Caban
Etz'nab
Cauac
Ahau

HAAB

19 month signs of the
365-day calendar

Pop
Uo
Zip
Zotz
Zec
Xul
Yaxkin
Mol
Ch'en
Yax
Zac
Ceh
Mac
Kankin
Muan
Pax
Kayab
Cumku
Uayeb

The date displayed is
Tuesday, January 14th, 1926 =
10 Manik, 5 Kankin
Long Count 12.15.11.14.7
(correlation constant 584283/Thompson)

The cermonial
Tzolkin calendar

The Tzolkin numbers

The civil Haab calendar

= zero
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15

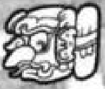
GLYPHS
of Mythos Gods

During the first part of the 20th century, great efforts were made to catalogue the numerous "logosyllabic" glyphs of the Mayan script discovered encoded within stone inscriptions and codices throughout Mexico and Central America. Mesoamerican scholars both famous and anonymous, professional and amateur contributed to this work, including Sir Eric Thompson, Sylvanus Morley, Doctor Henry Tiller, Eldon Sainte, and Jesus Montoya, many trekking deep into thick and thorny forests to record the forgotten symbols. The efforts of these intrepid individuals produced a collection of more than 800 -- albeit uninterpreted -- logograms and syllabograms, affording our modern academia with an appreciable head start at the decipherment of the ancient and obscure Mesoamerican language.

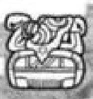
The works of one early explorer, a lesser-known Scottish-American epigrapher, were never added to the official catalogue, however. Father Morgan MacDermott, a Jesuit bishop, linguist, and art historian associated with Brown University and the Catholic Archdiocese of New York, chose to retain his findings from the collaborative efforts of his peers. MacDermott's own efforts in Mexico and Central America had yielded a set of 52 unconventional name glyphs: a collection of unorthodox, hieroglyphic symbols bearing heretofore unknown syllabary elements yet whose logographic aspect closely resembles the cartouche-like Mayan "Emblem Glyphs," the Maya designations for major cities, rulers, and gods. MacDermott determined that the name glyphs specify gods of the Cthulhu Mythos pantheon, including both Outer and Elder entities, as well as lesser terrestrial deities and many servitor races. Gathered from among the coastal ruins of Altun Ha, Ek Yotot, Tulúm, and a severely dilapidated temple city which the Jesuit called *Ciudad del Borrego* ("City of the Goat" -- whose location or existence has never been confirmed), MacDermott evidently had a special sense about knowing where to search for the unusual glyphs. He was apparently drawn to their hidden locations by "subconscious impressions" and "dread vibrations," and over time became convinced of a "sinister aura" associated with the glyph collection, one which he describes in his journals as "an ominous power of unnatural, black and singular import which poisons my sleep like an atrocious bane."

Eventually the explorer began to doubt his own findings, questioning the veracity and authenticity of the glyphic remnants and the means of their discovery. Fearing ridicule, defamation, and damage to his academic credentials, he chose to withhold the collection along with nearly a decade's worth of survey study and research, and with his health failing, Father MacDermott retired from the Central American jungles and returned to his home in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, in 1927 where he died later that same year. His extensive writings, sketches and monochromes were archived alternatively by Brown University, the University of Pennsylvania, the University of Cincinnati, and Columbia University until they were ultimately obtained by Barbour Brothers Press at auction in 1944. The papers have since seen only restricted publication by way of scientific journals and literary commentaries. A limited portion of the field notes are reproduced here, with permission.

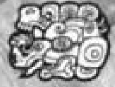
Three examples of conventional Mayan Emblem Glyphs, for comparison:



Chaak (deity)

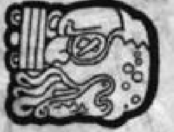


K'awiil II (ruler)

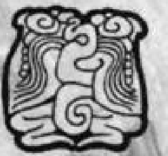


Tikal (city)

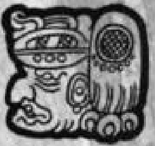
Selections from the MacDermott collection:



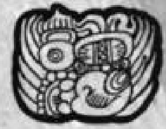
CTHYL'UK-IL (Cthulhu) specimen #00535.AH.24
Inexplicably incorporated with the number 16, this glyph also bears the syllabic "dream place."



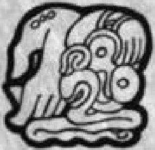
KUUN KY'AAN (Chaugnar Faugn) specimen #01991.UX.25
Ancient Mesoamericans theoretically had no contact with Asian or African fauna, yet the symbol clearly depicts an elephant's physical attributes: tusks, trunk, and ears.



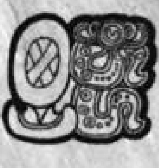
XAWIIL CHANAT MU (Ghatanothoa) specimen #00018.AH.21
Commonly described as a tangled, fleshy, "unutterable" mass, the Muan deity is uncharacteristically represented by the visage of a very old man. The glyph also contains "inhabitant." This was one of the first Mythos name glyphs to be identified.



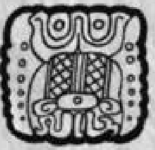
B'OK-IIN (Glaaki) specimen #01845.HK.25
A complex symbol, this glyph's most recognizable syllabic form is "fiery spear."



NICH NU'LAHUAY-EBET (The Crawling Chaos) specimen #00772.EY.25
"Messenger" and "unholy" combine with other elements as yet uninterpreted.



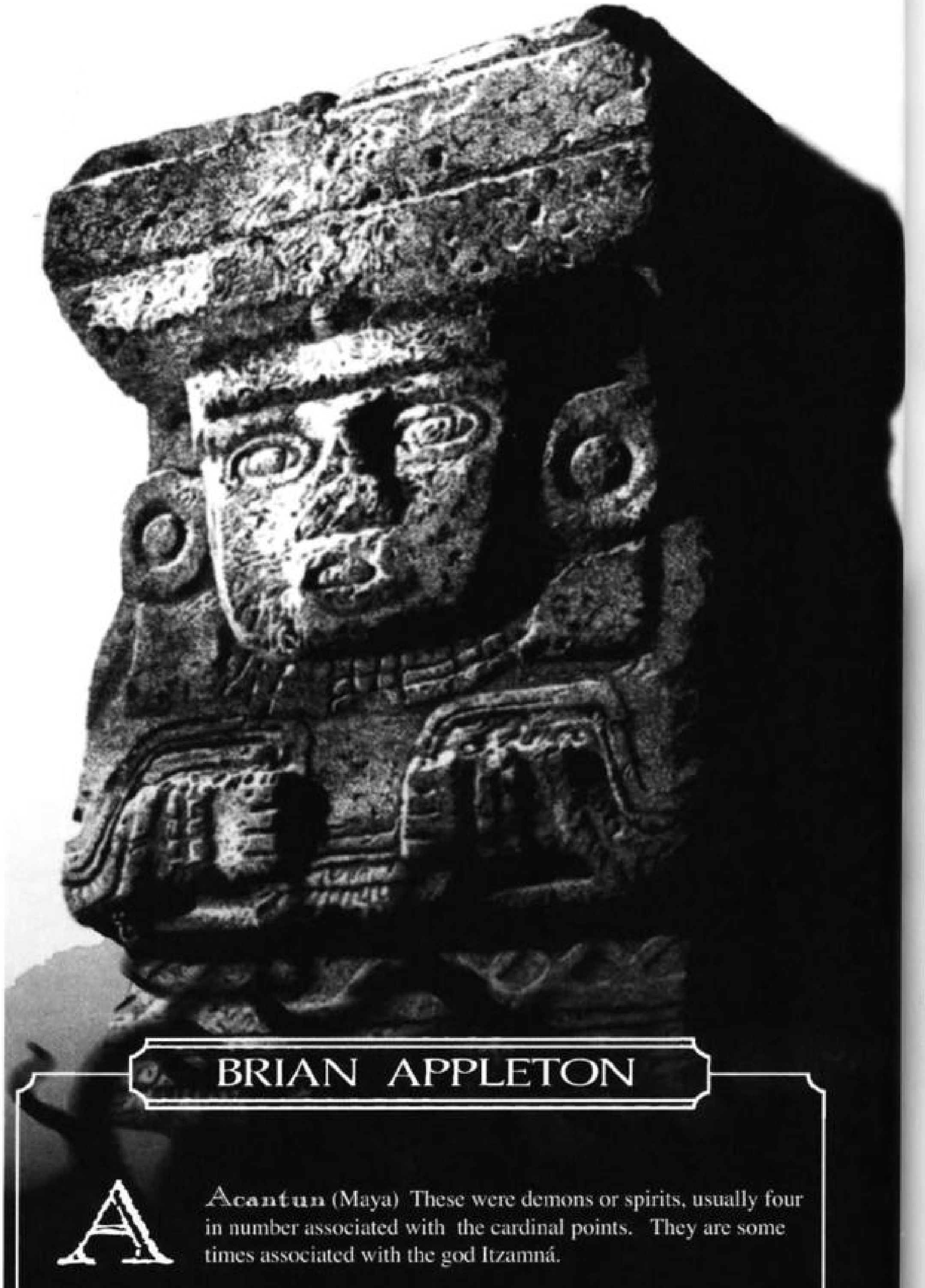
CHIX-AK'AB-NGY'YAL (Shub-Niggurath) speciment #00386.TM.25
This is the only name glyph comprised entirely of conventional syllabary components: "feminine divine" and multiple forms of "child."



KUK'SYIT-AAT (Yog-Sothoth) specimen #00391.AH.23
A prolific and enigmatic glyph, only one syllabic form is identifiable: "war against."

DEITIES & MONSTERS

of MESOAMERICA



BRIAN APPLETON

Acantun (Maya) These were demons or spirits, usually four in number associated with the cardinal points. They are some times associated with the god Itzamná.

Acat (Maya) The Maya god of life believed to form babies in their mothers' wombs.

Ah Chac Mitan Ch'oc (Maya) A Maya deity representing the planet Venus.

Ah Kinchil (Maya) A Maya god associated with the sun.

Ah Mun (Maya) The Maya god of maize, also called Yum Kaax.

Ah Puch (Maya) The Maya god of death. He is depicted with a skull for a head, bony ribs, and a spinal cord made visible due to starvation.

Ahuiateteo (Aztec) These were five deities associated with the misfortunes related to excessive otherworldly pleasures such as drinking, gambling, and sex.

Akna (Maya) A goddess of birth.

Amimitl (Aztec) A god that was the patron of the canal and garden system of the city of Xochimilco in the valley of Mexico along with Atlahuac.

Ancestors, Divine (Aztec/Maya) The primordial beings that instructed the creation deities with the charge of creating human beings. To the Aztec, these were Oxomoco and Cipactonal. To the Maya, they were Xpiyacoc and Xmucane.

Atlahua (Aztec) Aztec patron of fishing.

Atlahuac (Aztec) Patron of the canals and gardens of the city of Xochimilco along with Amimitl.

B

Bacab (Maya) A son of the Maya god Itzamná, usually grouped in fours. They were Hobnil, god of the east, whose color was red; Zac Cimi, god of the west, whose color was black; Can Tzional, god of the north, whose color was white; and Hozanek, god of the south, whose color was yellow.

Bat God (Zapotec) An unnamed bat god associated with fertility.

Bicephalic Monster (Maya) See Celestial Monster.

Bolom Dz'acab (Maya) The Long-Nosed god of the Maya, the Serpent Food deity, he was the patron of the lists of aristocratic lineage and ancestry; also known as God K of the Maya codices.

Bolontiku (Maya) The Maya Nine Lords of the Night; the rulers of Xibalba, the underworld.

C

Cabrakan (Maya) The giant son of Vucub Caquix known as Eathquake who was slain by the Hero Twins.

Cakulha-Hurakan (Maya) A sub-god of lightning who assisted Hurakan.

Camaxtli (Tlascalan) He was a war-god, a god of the chase.

Camazotz (Maya) A Maya deity having the form of a large vampire bat with huge teeth and a flint-knife-shaped nose that could sever the heads of a human being. Camazotz dwelled within the House of Bats, a gruesome cavern which lies on the path to the Maya underworld. [See "The Well of Sacrifice" for more details on Camazotz.]

Ce Acatl (Aztec) A form of Quetzalcóatl associated with astrology, astronomy, and divination.

Celestial Bird (Maya) Also called the Serpent Bird, this creature appears within the image of many depictions of the World Tree. It has a pectoral ring around its neck and sometimes carries an amulet in its beak.

Celestial Monster (Maya) A mythological creature, sometimes called the Cosmic Monster, portrayed by a sky-band decoration. It has two heads at opposite ends and resembles a dragon with the hooves of a deer.

Centeotl (Aztec) A solar deity associated with feasting, flowers, magic, pleasure, and feather workers.

Chac (Maya) The Maya god of rain represented by thunder and lightning. He was depicted as a long-nosed old man sometimes with whiskers. Also known as God B.

Chalchiuhtlicue (Aztec) "She of the Jade Skirt," a rain goddess honored as the patroness of birth and baptismal ceremonies. She was the consort of Tlaloc.

Chalchiuhtotolin (Aztec) "Jeweled Fowl," an aspect of Tezcatlipoca.

Chaneque (Olmec) Ancient dwarves revered by the Olmec and depicted on figurines. They were sometimes claimed to be mischievous spirits who liked to play tricks.

Chantico (Aztec) Goddess associated with the hearth and volcanic fires.

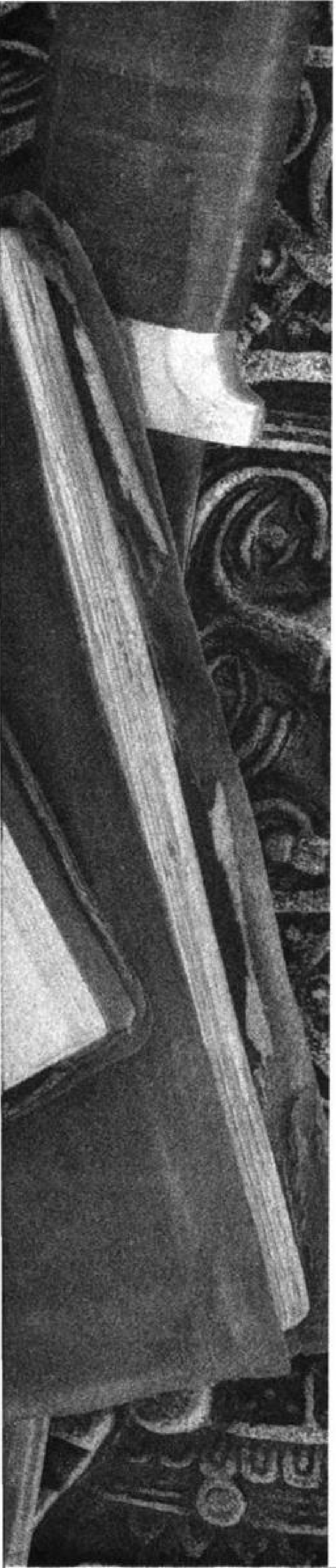
Chicomicoatl (Aztec) A goddess worshipped in Xochimilco as the patroness of the hearth; also called the Mother of Corn.

Chiconahuizcuintl (Aztec) Worshipped in Xochimilco, he was the god of the aged.

Chimalmat (Maya) The wife of Vucub Caquix and mother of Zipacna and Cabrakan.

Chin (Maya) A god of vice.

Chipi-Cakulha (Maya) A sub-god of the lightning-flash who assisted Hurakan.



Cihuacoatl (Aztec) "Woman Snake," she was the goddess of midwifery and sweatbaths. Sometimes she appeared as a hag, othertimes as a beautiful woman.

Cihuateteo (Aztec) Women who died in childbirth and returned from the dead as witches, haunting the crossroads seeking children and other victims.

Cinteotl (Aztec) He is the god of maize, and is also an aspect of Quetzalcóatl.

Cipachtli (Aztec) The Aztec goddess that represented the unformed earth. Quetzalcóatl and Tezcatlipoca divided her into two parts, the earth and the sky.

Citlalatonac (Aztec) Deity associated with the Milky Way; called Starshine.

Citlalinicue (Aztec) The consort of Citlalatonac.

Cizin (Maya) A god of death and also revered as an earth deity; also Kisin.

Coatlicue (Aztec) Coatlicue was the consort of the sun, a moon deity, a representation of the earth, and the mother of any of a number of Aztec deities depending upon which legend you read. Her appearance is grotesque - she appears with two great snakes emerging from her head facing each other. She has snakes in place of her hands as well. These snakes denote gouts of blood gushing from her severed throat and wrists. She stands on two taloned feet and wears a dress of woven rattlesnakes. She also wears a grisly necklace of severed hearts and hands in front of her breasts. [See "Menhirs in the Grotto" for more details on Coatlicue.]

Cocijo (Zapotec) The Zapotec god of rain which bears a resemblance to the Maya god, Chac.

Copijcha (Zapotec) The Zapotec god of the sun and patron of warriors and battle.

Copil (Aztec) The son of the sorceress goddess Malinalxoch who was the sister of Huitzilopochtli. This divine being attacked Huitzilopochtli out of revenge for his mother being abandoned by the Aztec. He was slain and his heart was thrown supposedly to the spot where Tenochtitlan was founded.

Coquixee (Zapotec) "The uncreated lord, who has no beginning and no end."

Coyolxauhqui (Aztec) A moon goddess of the Aztec, daughter of Coatlicue, who was slain along with her 400 brothers by her brother, Huitzilopochtli, when they attempted to kill their mother. He severed her head to form the moon and cast his brothers to the heavens to form the stars.

Cozaana (Zapotec) He is the creator and maker of the beasts.

Cueravaperi (Tarascan) The mother goddess of all the Tarascan deities.

Cuitlapanton (Aztec) A Mexican spirit similar to a banshee that had a short tail, matted hair, and waddled like a duck. She emitted a horrible cry during her travels. If one saw her, it was a sign of death or extreme misfortune.

Curiacaveri (Tarascan) The Tarascan patron of fire and part of the solar worship.

D

Diving God (1) (Huaxtec) A depiction of a monster-faced deity descending headfirst, believed to be a version of Quetzalcóatl.

Diving God (2) (Maya) Sometimes called the Bee God, he is usually portrayed as a young man diving from the sky. He is also God E of the Maya Codices.

Double-Headed Monster (Maya) Also called the Cosmic Monster, this beast had the body of a reptile and a skull for a head.

Dwarfs (Mesoamerican) Dwarfs were held in high reverence by the Mesoamericans. In the Aztec culture, they were the tlaloques, the brewers of rain. They were also the counselors and entertainers. To the Olmecs, they were also the brewers of rain, the chaneque. The Maya called them ch'at, the offspring of Chac. The Zapotec believed them to be the aides of the mountain gods.

E

Earth Moon Goddess (Huaxtec) A moon goddess depicted by the Huaxtec as a young woman.

Echua (Maya) A god of travellers.

Ehecatl (Aztec) A form of Quetzalcóatl associated as being a wind god.

Ek Chuah (Maya) The Maya patron deity of trading, war, and cacao.

F

Fat God (Maya) The Maya deity associated with the liquor, pulque, and gluttony.

Feathered Serpent (Mesoamerican) A Mesoamerican image usually depicted as a serpent with feathers swallowing a man. This image is associated with cosmology and religion. It is sometimes thought to be a manifestation of Quetzalcóatl.

Fire God (Mesoamerican) The ancient deity of volcanoes depicted as an old man worshipped all across Mesoamerica.

Fire Serpent (Mesoamerican) Cosmological creature of Mesoamerican cultures said to carry the sun on its back daily through the heavens. It was depicted with an upturned snout.

G

God A (Maya) See Ah Puch.

God B (Maya) See Chac.

God C (Maya) See Xamanek.

God D (Maya) See Itzamná.

God E (Maya) See Diving God (2).

God F (Maya) He is believed to be the war god of the Maya.

God G (Maya) A sun god of the Maya.

God H (Maya) A Maya god associated with the Great Serpent.

God I (Maya) The water goddess of the Maya represented as an old woman having wrinkled skin and clawed feet.

God K (Maya) See Bolom Dz'acab.

God L (Maya) A Maya god believed to be similar to Tepeyollotl.

God M (Maya) See Ek Chuah.

God N (Maya) A god associated with the end of the year who is depicted as an old man.

Goddess O (Maya) She is the deity of feminine old age.

God P (Maya) "The Frog God," he is possibly an agricultural deity or a representation of Kukulcán.

Gucumatz (Maya) In Guatemala, this was the name taken for the feathered serpent, the patron of culture and arts. Associated with Quetzalcóatl.

H

Hapay Can (Maya) A Maya god associated with the city of Izamal that required human sacrifices. Called the Sucking Snake.

Hapikern (Maya) An evil Maya deity who was the enemy of mankind and constantly battled Nohochacyum.

Hero Twins (Maya) These are the two twin heroic brothers, Hunahpu and Ixbalanque, whose journeys and exploits are detailed in the *Popul Vuh*. They are the sons of Lady Blood of Xibalba, princess of the underworld. They fought many battles against evil and they were eventually transformed into the sun and the moon.

Huahuantli (Aztec) "The Striped," see Teoyaomiqui.

Huehuecoyotl (Aztec) "Old Coyote," He is the Aztec patron of the dance, music, and feather workers. He appears as a coyote-headed man.

Huehueteotl (Huaxtec) A fire deity worshipped as the patron of volcanoes.

Huichaana (Zapotec) The female aspect of the creator-god.

Huitzilopochtli (Aztec) One of the chief deities of the Aztecs. He was the savior of the nation because he led them to their new homeland. He was a warrior god of the sun and the patron of military campaigns. He was the son of Coatlicue.

Huixtocihuatl (Aztec) "Salt Woman," Goddess of Salt and the Dissolute.

Hunab Ku (Maya) A chief Maya deity, sometimes called "the only living and true god."

Hunhau (Maya) A Maya death god associated with Ah Puch. He was believed to manifest into the forms of dogs and lightning.

Hurakan (Maya) The god of storms, whirlwinds, and thunder. He was called the Heart of Heaven in the *Popul Vuh*.

I

Ikil (Aztec) An Aztec goddess of the Milky Way.

Ilamatecuhtli (Aztec) She is a goddess of earth, death, and the Milky Way who wore a star skirt and carried a shield and a wand.

Ipalnemohuani (Aztec) A creator god of the Aztecs, also called Tloque Nahuaque.

Itzamná (Maya) Itzamná was looked upon as being the creator of human life, the inventor of writing, and the patron of science. He appears to be the chief patron of the ruling elite for their symbols of office depict two-headed serpents representing him. He often appears as an aged man with toothless jaws and hollowed cheeks but elsewhere he is depicted as having unmistakable reptilian traits. It was said that he could appear as a crocodile or with the antlers or hooves of a deer. The name Itzamná literally means "iguana house" or "lizard's house." Also called God D. [See "Temple of the Toad" for more information on Itzamná.]

Itztlacoyoliuhqui-Ixquimilli (Aztec) A god depicted in full armor with a stone face and being either sightless or blind. He represented stones and the cold.

Itztli (Aztec) "Stone Knife," an aspect of Tezcatlipoca in the form of a sacrificial knife.

Itzpapaleotl (Toltec, Zapotec, Aztec) "Obsidian Butterfly," she was usually depicted as a skeleton having jaguar talons and blade-tipped bat wings. She represented the evil associated with death in childhood and during eclipses.

Ix Azal Noh (Maya) The wife of the sun and a goddess of weaving.

Ix Chel (Maya) "Lady Rainbow," she was the patron of medicines, floods, and childbirth. She was the protector of weavers, midwives, and diviners. Also known as Ix Chebel Yax.

Ix Zacal Nok (Maya) She was "Lady Clothweaver" and possibly a moon goddess.

Ixazalvoh (Maya) She was the goddess of weaving and wife of Ah Kinchil.

Ixcuina (Aztec) "Four Faces," see Tlazolteotl.

Ixlilton (Mesoamerican) A deity associated with the playing of ballgames and various other athletic contests.

Ixpuzteque (Aztec) "Broken Face," an aspect of Tezcatlipoca that was a demon who appeared to lost travellers on the road, hopping horribly along on his single clawed foot.

Ixtab (Maya) Goddess of suicides.

Ixtlilton (Aztec) "Little Black Face," god of health and cure from ills.

Jaguar, Baby (Maya) A divine entity associated with the were-jaguar cult.

K

Kab-ul (Maya) An aspect of Itzamná called the "Magic Hand" who could bestow the gift of life.

Kukulcán (Maya) "Feathered serpent." He was associated with Quetzalcóatl and sometimes thought to be a reincarnation of that god; Kukulcán was the patron deity of the Maya elite. [See "The Heretics" for more information on Kukulcán.]

L

Lady Blood (Maya) She was the princess of the underworld, Xibalba, and the mother of the Hero Twins, Hunaphu and Ixbalanque.

Laxee (Zapotec) The patron god of magic and sorcery.

Lera Acuece (Zapotec) The patron god of medicine and the healing arts.

Lord of the Forest (Maya) A title bestowed to Ah Mun as he battled Ah Puch.

Lords of the Day (Aztec/Maya) Called the Oxlahuntiku, these lords were the rulers of the 13 layers of heaven.

Lords of the Night (Maya) Called the Bolontiku, these lords were the rulers of the 9 levels of Xibalba.

M

Macuilcalli (Xochimilco) A deity who was the protector of virgins.

Macuilxochitl (Aztec) The god of courtiers, gambling, and games.

Malinalxoch(itl) (Aztec) An evil sorceress who was the sister of Huitzilopochtli and the mother of Copil. She was said to have power over spiders, snakes, and scorpions.

Mam (Huaxtec) "Our Grandfather," he was revered as an earth deity, the bearer of thunder, and god of the year. He was also the patron of pulque.

Mayahuel (Toltec/Aztec) A goddess of milk having 100 breasts and the patroness of pulque. She was also a fertility goddess.

Metztli (Aztec) A goddess of the moon.

Mexitli (Aztec) The god associated with the earth and the protector of agricultural workers.

Mictecacihuatl (Aztec) The wife of Mictlantecuhtli and goddess of the dead.

Mictlantecuhtli (Aztec) The Aztec god of the dead often portrayed as a skeletal figure with red spots. He wore an elaborate headdress and a color of human eyeballs.

Mixcoatl (Aztec) "Cloud Serpent," he was a patron of cities and was associated with the stars especially the cult of Venus. He was also a patron of aquatic hunting and fishing. It was believed he brought fire and flint to humans.

Mixitli (Aztec) An Aztec earth deity.

Monkey Men (Maya) These are the evil half brothers of the Hero Twins. After being defeated in combat by Hunahpu and Ixbalanque, they were transformed into monkeys.

Moyocoyatzin (Aztec) He was called the Lord Who Invented Himself or He Who Fashions Himself From His Own Thoughts.

N

Naguals (Mesoamerican) Spirits revered by the Mesoamerican people who were believed to be able to transform into animals, the jaguar for example. [See "Menhirs in the Grotto" for more information on naguals.]

Nahualpilli (Xochimilco) A god of youth.

Nanahuatzin (Aztec) "The Prurulent One," according to legend, Nanahuatzin sacrificed himself by throwing himself into a fire to become the sun.

Nine-Wind (Mixtec) A form of Ehecatl, the god of the winds.

Niyohua (Zapotec) The god of the hunt.

Nohochacyum (Maya) A Maya god of creation.

O

Omacatl (Aztec) The god of joy, festivity, and good cheer.

Ometecuhtli (Aztec) A deity of pulque.

Ometochtli (Aztec) God to whom the game of patolli was dedicated.

Ometeotl (Aztec) "The Navel of the World," he was the creator god, and a deity of the sky.

One Death (Mixtec) A variation of the Aztec god, Tonatiuh, involved in solar sacrifices.

Opochtli (Aztec) A patron god of aquatic hunting and fishing.

Oxlahuntiku (Maya) The 13 Lords of the Day and the rulers of the 13 layers of heaven.

Oxomoco (Aztec) The grandmother goddess of the Aztec.

P

Patecatl (Aztec) He was the god of medicine and "lord of the pulque root."

Pauahtun (Maya) He was the skybearer god who held the heavens on his shoulders.

Paynal (Aztec) The messenger of Huitzilopochtli.

Pek (Maya) The great lightning-dog that descended from heaven with open jaws and and fiery tongue.

Pijetao (Zapotec) "God without end and without beginning, so they called him, without knowing whom."

Pitao Cozobi (Zapotec) A bat god associated that was the patron of maize and protector of harvests.

Pitao Huicaana (Zapotec) Goddess associated with ancestry worship.

Pitao Peeze (Zapotec) God of traders and merchants.

Pitao Pezelao (Zapotec) God of death associated with the underworld.

Pitao Xicala (Zapotec) The god of love, beauty, and dreams.

Pitao Xoo (Zapotec) The god associated with earthquakes.

Pitao Zij (Zapotec) The patron god of slaves, tenant farmers, and prisoners of war.

Q

Quetzalcoátl (Aztec) "The Feathered Serpent," this deity is the one that is universal to all of Mesoamerica in his many names, forms, and incarnations. He was the patron of astrology, astronomy, arts, and divination. He was also considered as a creator and a civilizer. He was sometimes pictured as being thin, fair of color, and having a black beard and long hair. He is depicted often as the human figure being carried in the mouth of the winged, feathered serpent. It is legend that he fought many battles with Tezcatlipoca, finally being tricked and forced to leave Tula. It was foretold that he would return one day from across the ocean from the east. The Maya believed he returned and became the god Kukulcán.

Quilaztli (Xochmilco) An Earth Mother goddess.

Quinametzin (Toltec) These were giants in the legends who failed tests imposed upon them by Tloque Nahuaque. As a result, they were destroyed by earthquakes.

R

Raxa-Cakulha (Maya) A sub-god of the track of lightning who assisted Hurakan.

S

Seven-Flower (Mixtec) See Xochipilli.

Seven-Rain (Mixtec) See Xipe Totec.

Six Rabbits (Xochimilco) See Centeotl.

T

Tariacuri (Tarascan) The god of the wind.

Tecciztecatl (Aztec) "He who comes from the land of the sea-slug shell," he was the moon god.

Teoyaomiqui (Aztec) The god of dead warriors.

Tepeyollotl (Aztec) "Heart of the Mountain," a jaguar deity associated with warriors and with calenders. He is thought to be a form of Tezcatlipoca.

Tepoztecatl (Aztec) A patron god of pulque, see also Ometecuhtli.

Teteoinnan (Aztec) The patron god of medicine, fertility, the earth, birth, and flowers.

Tetzahuitl (Aztec) A very ancient Aztec deity of the lunar cults.

Tetzauhpilli (Xochimilco) The patron deity of flowers and rain.

Tezcatlipoca (Aztec) "Smoking Mirror," he was a chief deity of the Aztec. He was known as a sorcerer extraordinaire. He was sometimes known as the bringer of grief or the destroyer. He fought many battles with Quetzalcóatl, finally driving him from Tula. He is called "Smoking Mirror" due to the fact that he had his left foot bitten off by the earth monster, Tlaltecuhtli, and it was replaced with an obsidian mirror. [See "Menhirs in the Grotto" for more information on Tezcatlipoca.]

Tezcatzontecatl (Aztec) An important pulque god identified with the Chacmool figures.

Titlacauan (Huaxtec) He was a deity of magic.

Tlahuizcalpantecuhtli (Toltec) "Lord of the Dawn," the deity was a skybearer depicted as hurling lightning balls.

Tlaloc (Aztec) The chief Aztec god of rain invoked in many agricultural practices.

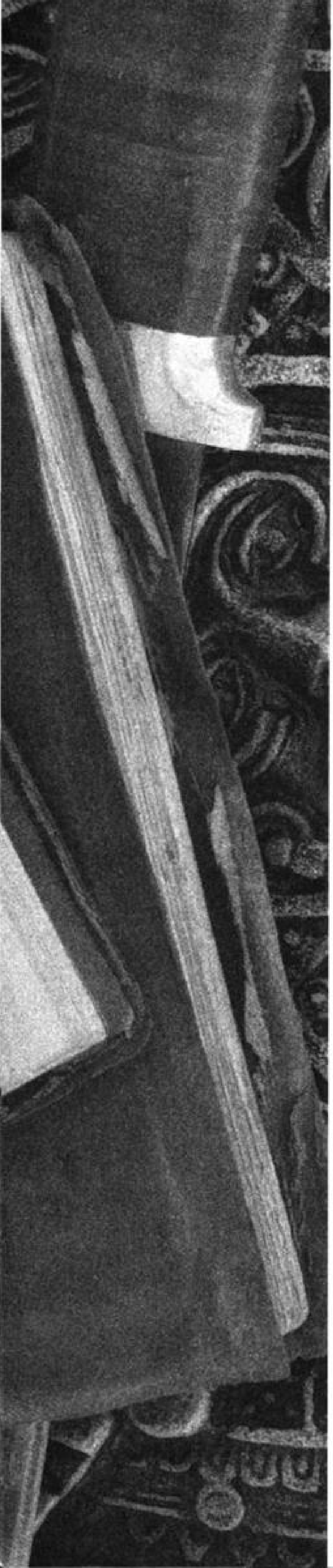
Tlaloques (Aztec) These were the dwarf helpers of Tlaloc who brewed the rain.

Tlaltecuhtli (Aztec) Called the Earth Lady, she was depicted as a huge toad with mouths at her joints.

Tlazolteotl (Aztec) "The Eater of Filth," she was a purifier and a healer. She was usually depicted with a broom.

Tloque Nahuaque (Aztec) A creator god described as "the god of the near and the immediate."

Tlozolteotl (Huaxtec) A grandmother deity that was a goddess of fertility and divination. She presided over the rituals concerned with the confessions of sin.



Toci (Aztec) Known as Our Grandmother, she was an earth goddess, a patroness of midwives and curers. She was also identified with war and was called the Woman of Discord.

Tohil (Maya) The patron god of noble lineages.

Tonacacihuatl (Aztec) She was the goddess who transferred infant souls from heaven to the maternal womb.

Tonacatecuhtli (Aztec) A deity associated with agricultural cycles and festivals.

Tonantzin (Aztec) "Our Mother," see Cihuacoatl.

Tonatiuh (Aztec) "He Who Goes Forth Shining," a deity associated with the primordial creative forces and with the sun.

Tzitzimitl (Aztec) These were the star demons of darkness believed to dive headfirst from the heavens to attack and destroy. They were usually depicted as female skeletal figures.

U

Uinturopan (Tarascan) A patroness of maize.

Usukunkyum (Maya) The brother of Ah Kinchil. He protected his brother from the evil spells of the god, Cizin.

V

Votan (Maya) A form of Kukulcán who proclaimed himself as the great snake.

Vucub Caquix (Maya) The great vulture deity associated with the Lords of the Night who was killed by the Hero Twins.

W

Were-jaguar (Mesoamerican) It was claimed that the greatest Mesoamerican shamans were nahualli, form-changers who could undergo a transformation taking the form of the jaguar. This entity was known as a were-jaguar, half-man and half-beast - a snarling, monstrosity humanoid in form but with the head, feet, and claws of a jaguar. [See "Menhirs in the Grotto" for more information on were-jaguars.]

X

Xaratange (Tarascan)
The patroness of fertility and nurturing.

Xamanek (Maya) A god of astronomical importance, possibly the god of the Polar Star.

Xelhua (Aztec) A giant who escaped the Great Flood by climbing the mountain of Tlaloc. He later built the pyramid of Cholula.

Xilonen (Aztec) A goddess of maize.

Xipe Totec (Aztec) "The Flayed God," he was depicted as a young man wearing a human skin.

Xiuhcoatl (Aztec) "The Fire Serpent."

Xiuhtecuhtli (Aztec/Zapotec) A Mesoamerican fire god revered in festivals of the New Fire and in rituals concerning the calendar.

Xochipilli (Aztec) A solar deity; a god of maize, flowers, feasting, pleasure, and he patron of feather workers. He was also a patron of beauty, dance, and love.

Xochiquetzal (Aztec) A goddess of weavers, childbirth, pregnancy, and motherhood.

Xochiquetzalli (Xochimilco) A goddess of labor, harvests, and the New Fire festivals.

Xocotl (Aztec) A god of fire and the stars.

Xolotl (Aztec) Represented by a dog, he was the mystical twin of Quetzalcóatl associated with filth and immorality.

Xonaxi Quecuya (Zapotec) The goddess of the underworld and death.

Y

Yacatecutli (Aztec) He was the patron god of the merchant classes and Lord of Travellers.

Yaocihuatl (Aztec) "Enemy Woman," the grandmother of Huitzilopochtli.

Yaotl (Aztec) "Enemy," an aspect of Tezcatlipoca.

Yahui (Mixtec) Divine beings believed to be demon companions of sorcerers depicted as flying creatures.

Yum Kaax (Maya) See Ah Mun.

Yuncemil (Maya) A Maya god of death.

Z

Zipacna (Maya) A giant son of Vucub Caquix known as the Earth-heaper who was slain by the Hero Twins.

Zotzilaha Chimalman (Maya) Another name for Camazotz.

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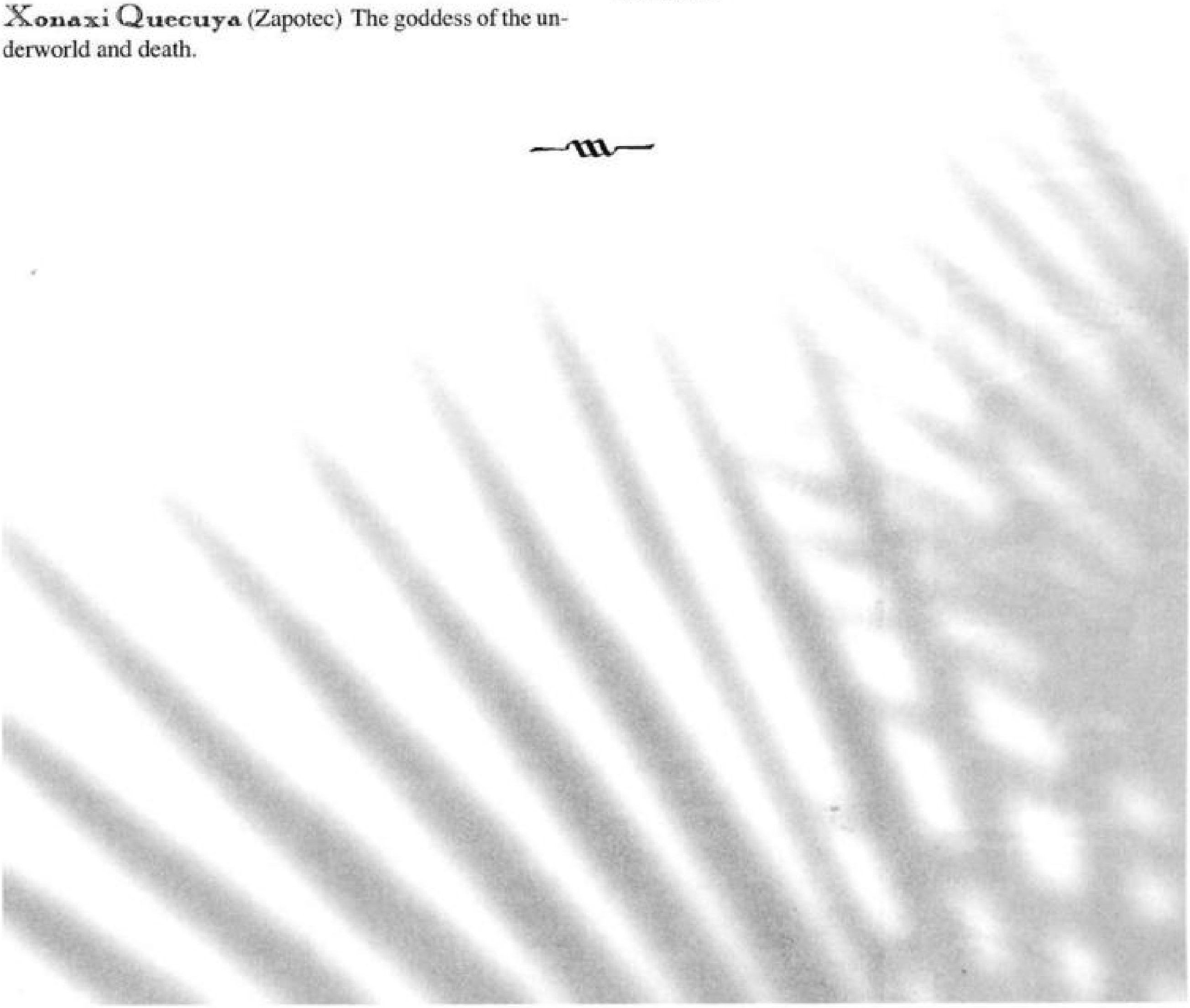


MESOAMERICAN ARMAMENTS

BRIAN APPLETON

Contrary to many theories held in the 1920s, warfare was an important factor in the lives of all of the Mesoamerican tribes. There were constant power struggles between the various tribes that resulted in the life or death of the tribe. Tribal influence and power flourished and diminished through imperialism and expansionism. It became such a commonplace event that so called "Flower Wars," in which subservient tribes literally sent warriors to fight to become prisoners of the dominant tribes, existed. This taking of prisoners provided the sacrifices which was much needed in their eyes to appease the gods.

The armaments among the indigenous Mesoamerican peoples were a necessity to their survival. These armaments were used in many facets of life including warfare, hunting, or daily ritualistic practices such as sacrifices. While there might have been subtle variation amongst the different tribes, this is a generalized range of arms common to all.

ARMAMENTS OF WAR

Projectile

Projectile weapons greatly enhance the capability of a fighting force. They enable one to strike at his enemy from a distance and hopefully deal enough casualties to him before the main battle. Projectile weapons common to the Mesoamericans included the atlatl, the bow, and the sling.

The atlatl (ahtlatl), or spear-thrower, was used to hurl shortened spears for longer distances and with greater force than the normal spear could be hurled by hand. There was a great variety of spears that were fitted for the atlatl. Their shafts were usually made of oak but there was a multitude of tips including obsidian, flint, fishbone, and copper. Spears were usually single-tipped but a number of multi-tipped spears did exist. Examples include the tlacochtli, or fire-hardened spears and the minacachalli, or three-pronged spears normally used to hunt birds. The effectiveness of the atlatl is attested to by Spanish sources which state that spears from an atlatl could pierce any armor and still inflict fatal wounds.

Bows, known as tlahuitolli, were simple bows usually made up to 5 feet long with animal-sinew or deerskin-thong bowstrings. Barbed, blunt, and single-pointed of obsidian, flint, or fishbone made up the variety of points of the war arrows, or yaomitl. Archers were known to possess quivers which contained twenty arrows on average. The Mesoamericans were not known to use poisoned arrows like other Native Americans did elsewhere, but they did use fire arrows, or tlemitl, against buildings. Spanish claims of the deadly accuracy of the Indians' archery are vastly documented.

The slings, or tematlatl, were normally made of maguey fiber and were used to hurl stones at the enemy. The stones used were specially handshaped rounded stones that were stockpiled in advance. The Spanish commented that sling stones were even more damaging than the Indians' other weapons just due to the hail of stones that rained down upon them. Slingers and archers were known to be complementary and usually served close together.

Melee

Melee, or hand-to-hand, weapons were the true force behind the Mesoamerican warriors. It was usually these weapons that determined the outcome of the battles. Included amongst these were the thrusting spear, the sword, and the club.

Thrusting spears (tepoztopilli) were normally around 6-7 feet long. Most were made with either a triangular, ovoid, or diamond-shaped head that comprised perhaps a quarter of the total length. They were normally made with wooden shafts and stone blades. Unlike the name implies, these spears were probably used to slash as much as thrust due to the large heads they possessed. It was stated that the blades were so sharp that the Indians shaved their heads with them. These spears were not designed to be thrown, but could be if necessary.

Swords (macuahuitl) made by the Mesoamericans were made in both the one- and two-handed varieties. They were made of wood, usually oak, and possessed obsidian or flint blades that were fitted into grooves that ran along the edges. The normal length of the swords was around 3.5-4 feet. The Spanish claim that the blades on the macana, as they called the sword, were sharp enough to sever the head of a horse with one blow.

Clubs came in many sizes and shapes. Of course, there were the ordinary standard wooden ones, but there was a variety of others. One kind was the huitzauhqui which contained stone blades imbedded into the wood. Another was the cuauhololli which was a simple wooden club with a spherical end. A final example was the macuahuitzoctli which had a knob of wood protruding from each of its four sides plus a pointed tip on the end.

Armor

Whereas the ordinary warrior only fought in his loincloth, Mesoamericans did possess a fair variety of armor. These were normally made of cotton with reinforced backing.

Hides and plaited palm leaves comprised the materials for many war shields (yaochimalli). Many were heavy double cotton reinforced with bamboo. Most were covered with feathers and designs. The Aztecs were noted for using round shields although both square and rectangular shields were found throughout the Gulf Coast area and the Maya area. Some shields, made from fire-hardened woven sticks, were so tough that a sword could barely damage them and a bow couldn't shoot through them.

Quilted cotton armor (ichcahuipilli) was the most common type of armor used. They were made of unspun cotton stitched between two layers of cloth. They were so thick that it was difficult for an arrow or an atlatl spear to penetrate them. This armor only covered the torso.

The war suit (tlahuiztli) fit over the appendages as well as the torso due to the sleeves and leggings incorporated into their manufacture. They were worn over the cotton armor and were not padded. These were generally worn by nobles and were usually fashioned to appear as animal skins even though they were actually made of feathers sewn upon a backing material.

Some war leaders wore feather tunics (ehuatl) over their cotton armor. These were not as common or effective as the war suit but did offer a reasonable amount of protection despite its lack of leggings or sleeves.

While an uncommon occurence, even helmets were worn by some warriors. The helmets were normally made of wood or bone covered with feathers or were made from the heads of wild animals mounted over a frame of wood or quilted cotton.

Other types of armor, mostly worn by nobles, were armbands (matemecatl), greaves (cotzehuatl), and wristlets (matzopetztli). These were normally made of wood, bark, or very thin gold covered with leather and feathers.

WEAPONS OF EVERYDAY USE

Weapons served the Mesoamericans in other purposes besides warfare. They were essential to survival for they are the means which brought the meat home. They were also a part of the daily rituals of the Mesoamerican society.

Blowguns (tlacalhuazcuahuitl) were weapons used for hunting specifically birds. They were long hollow tubes appoximately 5 feet long used to blow clay pellets at the intended game. They were not used as a military weapon to any degree.

Axes (tlateconi) were not believed to have been used in combat situations but were instead used as both a tool and as a weapon for rituals. The axes were made with wooden shafts and stone heads. Axes were depicted in several codices as being instruments of execution via decapitation in sacrifice.

Knives, while usually carried by warriors, were more known for their uses as tools and as ritualistic weapons. The tecpatl was a large flint knife used mainly for sacrificial purposes. Many of these knives were very elaborately designed into a variety of shapes mostly resembling figures or animals. Another term for the knives was itztli, which were obsidian-made knives.

WEAPON SKILLS REVISITED

Archery Attack: This is the skill for using similar bow-type weapons such as the composite bow, the short bow, the longbow, the recurved bow, etc. This would differ from the use of a crossbow which would use a different skill. Archery attacks can impale.

Atlatl Attack: This is the skill required to use the spear-throwing device to its full effect. There is a much more involved task in using the atlatl than just to make this "Throw Spear" skill. One must know the proper way to load the spear and maintain a balance to get the best result from the throw. On a successful attack, add half of the damage bonus to the damage done. Attacks from a spear thrown with an atlatl can impale.

Blowgun Attack: This is the skill for accurately shooting darts through the tubes of a blowgun. The darts can be treated with poison if the user properly knows this procedure. Refer to the Poison rules in the *COC* rulebook to deal with the effects. The dart from the blowgun can impale with a successful attack.

Club Attack: This is the skill for wielding any of the club-like devices such as a nightstick, a blackjack, a chairleg, or a cuauhololli. Due to the wide variety of club-like objects, the skill is divided into Large Club Attack and Small Club Attack skills. Extremely large clubs like a sledgehammer would require a wielder to have a minimum STR of 13. Attacks with axes are also included in this category. A club attack cannot impale.

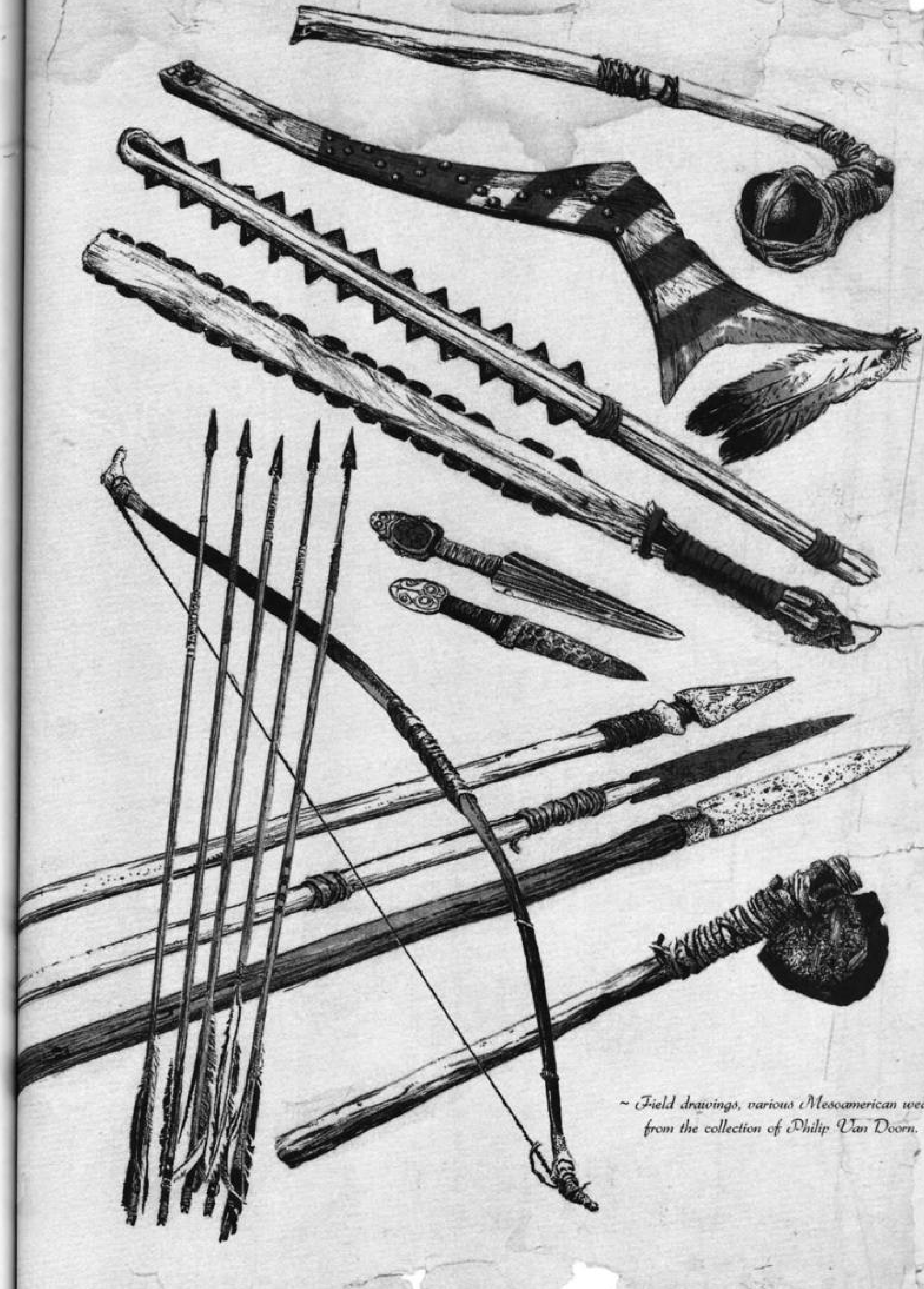
Knife Attack: This category of weapons include Bowie knives, hunting knives, dirks, daggers, kitchen knives, switchblades, and similar weapons. Successful attacks can impale.

Sling Attack: This is the skill for appropriately using a thong-leather sling. The wielder must develop the specific technique in order to properly use the sling. This attack cannot impale.

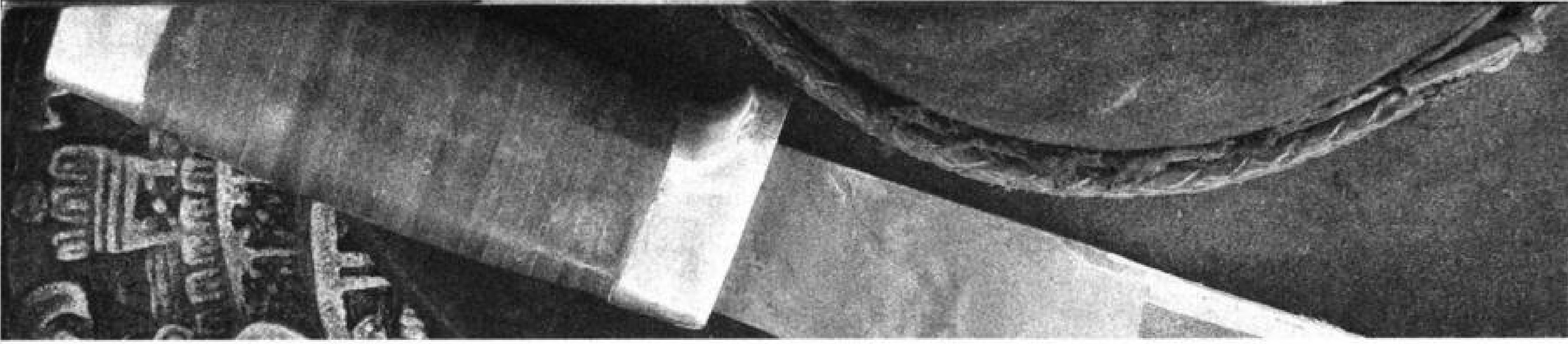
Spear Attack: This is the skill for correctly using polearm weapons such as the spear, lance, harpoon, and others. Both slashing and thrusting attacks can be made with this weapon type. A successful attack can impale.

Sword Attack: This is the skill to effectively attack with a sword. Examples would include the broadsword, the sabre, large machetes, and the macuahuitl. Attack techniques will vary from sword to sword. A successful sword attack can impale.

* * *



~ Field drawings, various Mesoamerican weapons, from the collection of Philip Van Doorn.



Weapon	Skill Used	Base %	Damage	Base Range	Attacks/Round	HP
Ahtlatl spear *	Atlatl @	15	1D6+1/2DM	See Throw Rule	1	14
Cuauhololli	Large Club	25	1D8+DM	Touch	1	20
Huitzauhqui	Large Club	25	1D8+1+DM	Touch	1	20
Itztli *	Knife	25	1D6+DM	Touch	1	14
Macuahuitl **	Sword	20	1D8+1+DM	Touch	1	20
Macuahuitzoctli	Large Club	25	1D8+1+DM	Touch	1	20
Tecpatl *	Knife	25	1D6+DM	Touch	1	4
Temetatl Stone	Sling @	10	1D6+1/2DM	See Throw Rule	1/2	--
Tepoztopilli *	Spear	20	1D6+1+DM	Touch	1	14
Tlacalhuazcuahuitl Pellet	Blowgun	15	1D3	20 yards	1/2	--
Tlateconi **	Large Club	25	1D8+2+DM	Touch	1	20
Yaomitl *	Bow	10	1D10+2	30 yards	1/2	8

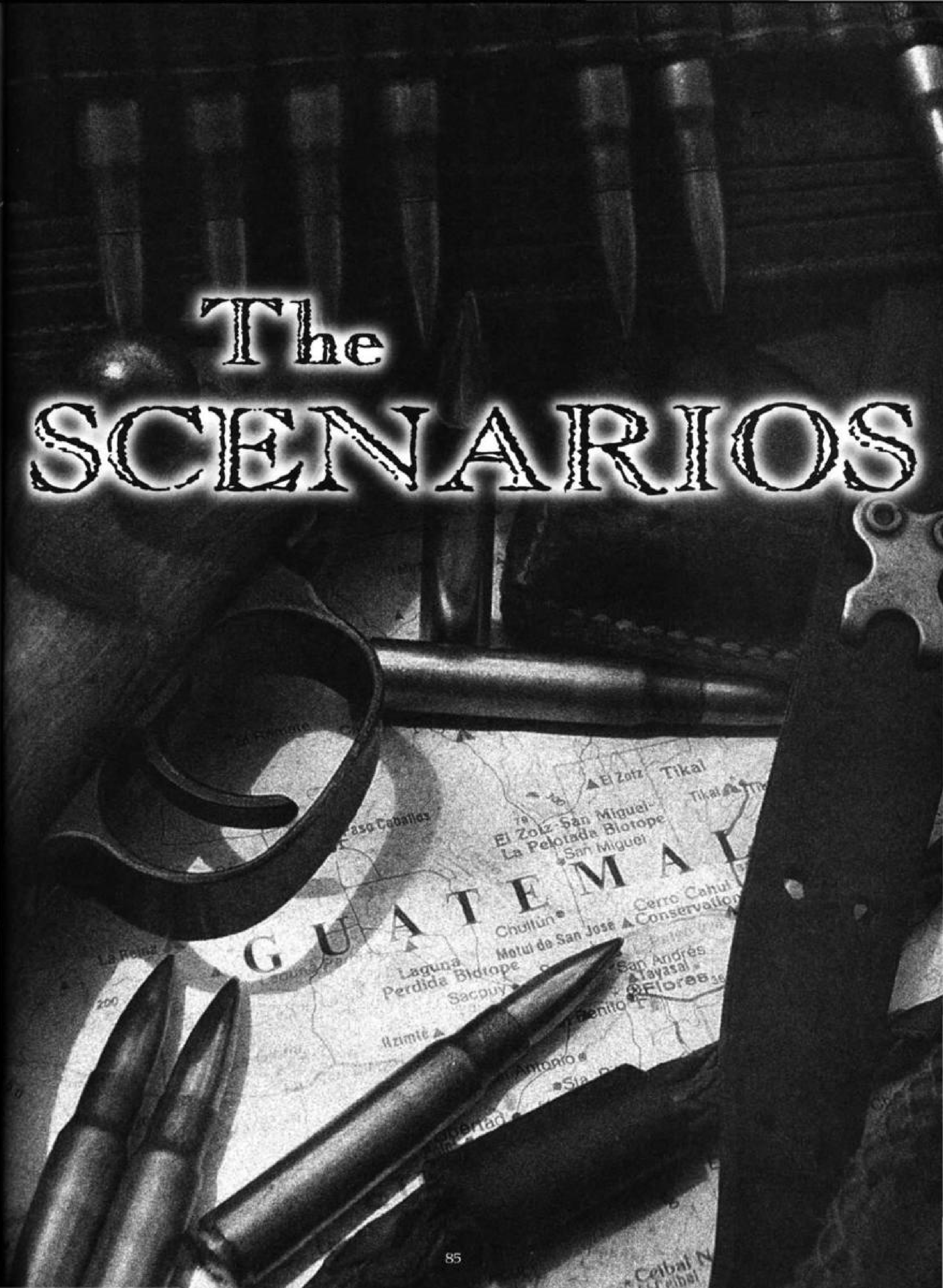
+DM: plus damage modifier.
+1/2DM: plus half of the damage modifier; this is the extra damage from the throwing damage.
1/2: this weapon can be use only every second round
*: this weapon can impale
**: this weapon can impale at the Keeper's option.
@: this weapon uses a different skill other than Throw due to skill needed with hurling devices.

ARMOR STATISTICS

Type	Armor Value
Ichcahuipilli	1 HP
Tlahuiztli *	2 HP
Ehuatl *	3 HP
Yaochimalli	5 HP **
Helmet	1 HP

* Armor Value considers individual to be wearing ichcahuipilli underneath
**If a hit occurs to the area of the body where the defender is using his shield.

The SCENARIOS


El Zotz
Tikal
El Zotz-San Miguel-La Pelotada Biotope
San Miguel
GUATEMAL
Cerro Cahui
Motul de San José
Laguna Perdida Biotope
Sacpuy
San Andrés
Tayasal
Flores

THE WELL OF SACRIFICE

John H. Crowe, III

Introduction

The Yucatán has long been at best a marginally explored region of Latin America. As one of the great centers of the ancient Maya culture, it holds many secrets long sought after by historians and archæologists from around the world. The investigators are a small, independent group of explorers whose mission is to seek out and survey sites of ruined cities and towns on the peninsula. This includes mapping them as well as photographing and sketching them. Such activity is a prelude to full fledged expeditions being contemplated by major universities and museums.

The primary stumbling block to major foreign archæological expeditions is the political situation in Mexico. The country has been in political upheaval for decades and no reputable institution is willing to risk sending a team or expending substantial funds there. Many are planning for the day when the government becomes stable. Little do they realize this day is less than a decade away. At present, it is late May of 1914. The investigators comprise a small team of experts hired by a major museum or university. Options include Miskatonic University, the University of Pennsylvania, Harvard University, the Carnegie Institution of Washington, and the British Museum, all institutions with superior or active programs in archæology. The Keeper can decide among these or any others that seem appropriate and that fits into his or her campaign.

The team's first stop was Mérida, the capital of the state of Yucatán and the largest city on the peninsula. This community is an important source of supplies and assistance and provides a well-located haven and place of respite. Its libraries and booksellers are often key sources of information not widely available outside of the Yucatán.

The group has spent several months surveying major sites including Chichén Itzá and Uxmal and are now seeking lesser known sites. The scenario begins when one of their number stumbles across information on sites near the shoreline opposite the island of Cozumel.

The "Well of Sacrifice" is a non-Cthulhu Mythos scenario designed for three or four investigators of low to moderate experience. All must be dedicated to the study of the Maya and not averse to strenuous physical activity. Field archæologists and historians are appropriate as are artists, photographers, surveyors, and explorers. At least one should qualify as an expert in Mayan history and religion, both ancient and modern. A qualified surveyor is also a necessity since sites must be accurately mapped. The rest may simply be enthusiasts and amateurs who are willing to assist the expert(s). In addition to wilderness and outdoor skills such as Climb and Jump, ideal skills for at least some to possess are Land Navigation, Cartography, History, Archæology, and Anthropology. Useful languages are Spanish and Yucatec. The former is useful in towns and cities and is required to be able to converse and interact with government authorities. The latter is the language of the modern Maya and will be of use on a day to day basis, especially in the countryside.

Background Information

The Yucatán is a dark and mysterious region with many portions remaining unexplored or marginally explored at the time of this scenario. Many sites remain to be discovered and the investigators are one group among many whose task it is to uncover the mysteries of the ancient inhabitants of this land.

The theory prevailing at this time is that the Maya were a peaceful people who did not commit great blood sacrifices like their notorious neighbors, the Aztecs. This is incorrect, however. The Maya were constantly warring amongst each other and human sacrifice was all too common. Despite the warfare and bickering, this civilization achieved greatness in literature, architecture, astronomy, and mathematics.

The site which the investigators will explore in this scenario is one of many small ruin sites on the Yucatán Peninsula. Great cities attract much attention, but smaller communities existed whose remains can teach much to modern historians. One such site is Xamanik.

Xamanik (a fictitious site) was established by migrating Mayans many centuries ago. The exact date of its creation is unknown, but it is likely to have been first inhabited around 1200 A.D., making it a contemporary of the city of Tulúm. It was built around a great cenote (water filled sinkhole) that served as its primary water source and a center of culture and religion. As the community grew and prospered, monuments were erected and the traditional cycle of sacrifices commenced. Especially important sacrifices occurred on the summer and winter solstices and fall and spring equinoxes. For centuries, these Maya lived in relative peace and isolation.

Strangely, their city fell not due to disease, insurrection, or warfare, but due to an act of nature. One night, the area was shaken by a mild earth tremor, a common occurrence that the people were accustomed to. Yet, when they went to draw water the next morning, to their dismay, the great cenote was empty. Staring into its depths, all they saw was a muddy bottom and puddles and shallow pools of brackish water. Obviously, this was an act of the gods. The decision was unavoidable. Without the well, the community could not survive, much less prosper. The site was abandoned within days and soon was reclaimed by the forest.

Years passed, but Mayans in the region never forgot the old site. Soon, the priests of the nearby city of Tulúm discovered the site and found it was ideal for their special needs. They had learned how to tame and control a rare species of bat they called the "Winged Devils." A huge species of albino vampire bat, a typical adult specimen is the size of a small calf. Once fairly prolific in the Yucatán and to a lesser extent southern Mexico and Central America, Winged Devils were becoming an increasingly rare sight even at this time. By the twentieth century, only a few flocks remain and are yet to be documented by mainstream science.

The priests of Tulúm as well as a few other Mayan cities learned via spells and simple training techniques how to master the Winged Devils. Several bat cults formed around these creatures who were seen by some as incarnations of various gods or simple servants to be exploited. In Tulúm, Camazotz, the killer bat of legend, was elevated to the level of a major god for a time and this was purely due to the presence of the Winged Devils.

These frightening carnivores are wholly nocturnal and are unable to stand up to prolonged exposure to bright light. Their sole food source is the blood of humans and animals and they tend to go for large prey…people, livestock, tapirs, jaguars, peccaries, and the like. Winged Devils and the spell Summon the Winged Devils are described further later.

With a flock of these creatures under their control, the priests knew they had to locate them in a convenient and safe place. The ruins of Xamanik were ideal. The dry cenote was discovered to be the entrance to a series of natural caves and tunnels formed long ago by the movement of ground water through porous limestone. The priests placed their new flock of servants within these caves and kept them here by continually sacrificing animals and humans to them. In return, the bats served as effective guardians for treasure and religious artifacts as well as a tangible source for religious veneration.

Within the cenote, they erected a single stela. Inscribed with the symbols of their new god Camazotz and

TULÚM

"Tulúm" is the Mayan word for "wall" or "fortification." Well named is the city of Tulúm which, like Mayapán, is one of only a handful of Mayan sites to possess a defensive perimeter wall. Tulúm is one of the two greatest ruin sites in the state of Quintana Roo, Mexico (the other being Cobá). Like Mayapán, it seems that Tulúm is a young city, being first occupied most likely in the Post-Classic period, perhaps around the year 1200 A.D.

Quintana Roo is not known for great sites like Tikal, Chichén Itzá, or Uxmal. As a whole, it is dotted with smaller, less significant, unexcavated sites and as of 1945 was largely unexplored and unknown. While Tulúm is great by the standards of this region, it is actually a relatively small city which in its finest hour probably housed less than one thousand inhabitants. Nevertheless, it is a remarkable site.

Perched atop the only cliffs to be found along that entire stretch of coast, the other three sides of the city are protected by a formidable wall that averages eighteen feet in thickness and varies in height from nine feet to fifteen feet. With the Gulf of Mexico forming the fourth side of the perimeter, the city is a large rectangle and Spaniards viewing it from the sea in the 1500s were quite impressed. Enhancing the defense were two watchtowers, one placed at each landward corner. Five "gates" (narrow openings in the wall) can be found, two in the north side, two in the south side, and one in the west side. Despite its diminutive size, Tulúm was likely an important trading center and there is strong evidence it was closely tied to the so-called "League of Mayapán."

There is more to Tulúm than its defenses and unique location. Overall, the site is in relatively good condition. Within the walls is a cleared area that contains all the monuments and buildings of the site (little of note is outside the perimeter). One interesting piece is a stela that is the oldest one in existence. How it ended up in Tulúm is not known, but some scholars theorize that it was moved from elsewhere while others believe the site is actually much older than it appears. Throughout the site, masonry and stonework is generally crude when compared to cities like Chichén Itzá and the high point is the superb frescoes that can be found in the Temple of the Frescoes (described later). Tulúm lacks a pyramid; its greatest feature is the "Castillo" which was a temple prior to the Conquest. The temple building itself is a two room affair which can be entered through a large doorway. This doorway is split into three entrances by a pair of serpent columns. The temple itself is set atop a stone platform which can be ascended via a set of wide stone stairs. Flanking the stairs are rooms on lower levels that served as small oratories.

Adjacent to the "Castillo" is the Temple of the Descending God (a.k.a. Temple of the Diving God). Within can be found a depiction of the "Descending God" and the remains of murals. It can only be entered through a single doorway. The "Descending God" may have been some sort of bee god. Representations of this deity are found throughout the site as well as at other sites in Quintana Roo (most notably Cobá twenty five miles to the northwest) and at Sayil in the state of Yucatán.

The last major building is the Temple of the Frescoes. A two story structure with four columns at the ground level forming five doorways, these open into a corridor that surrounds an inner chamber on three sides. The walls of this chamber bear the remains of murals. The upper floor is a single room that can only be reached through a doorway in the outside wall.

Up until 1972, Tulúm was poorly situated from the point of view of visitors and explorers. While it is now one of the most visited sites due to the development of Cancun as a modern day resort, previous to this it was in a remote, inhospitable area and few saw it prior to the nineteenth century. Catherwood and Stephens documented it and sketched it during their 1842 expedition and later archæologists managed to also check it out, most notably Sylvanus Morley in 1913, 1916, and 1918 and Samuel Lothrop in 1924. In 1922, Morley and Lothrop visited the site together. An epigrapher, Morley was most interested in documenting Mayan writings while Lothrop was the first to attempt an accurate and detailed survey of the site (in 1924).

Throughout this period, the region was dominated by Maya who were hostile to the Mexican government and essentially had total control over the area. During their 1922 expedition, Morley and Lothrop had a dangerous encounter with armed rebel Maya, but quick thinking by Morley allowed them to talk their way out.

Interestingly enough, Tulúm has remained significant in the religion of area Maya despite the Spanish Conquest and the influx of Christianity. Non-Christian observances and rituals were known to go on there well into the twentieth century and these often entailed leaving offerings at the bases of certain stelae.

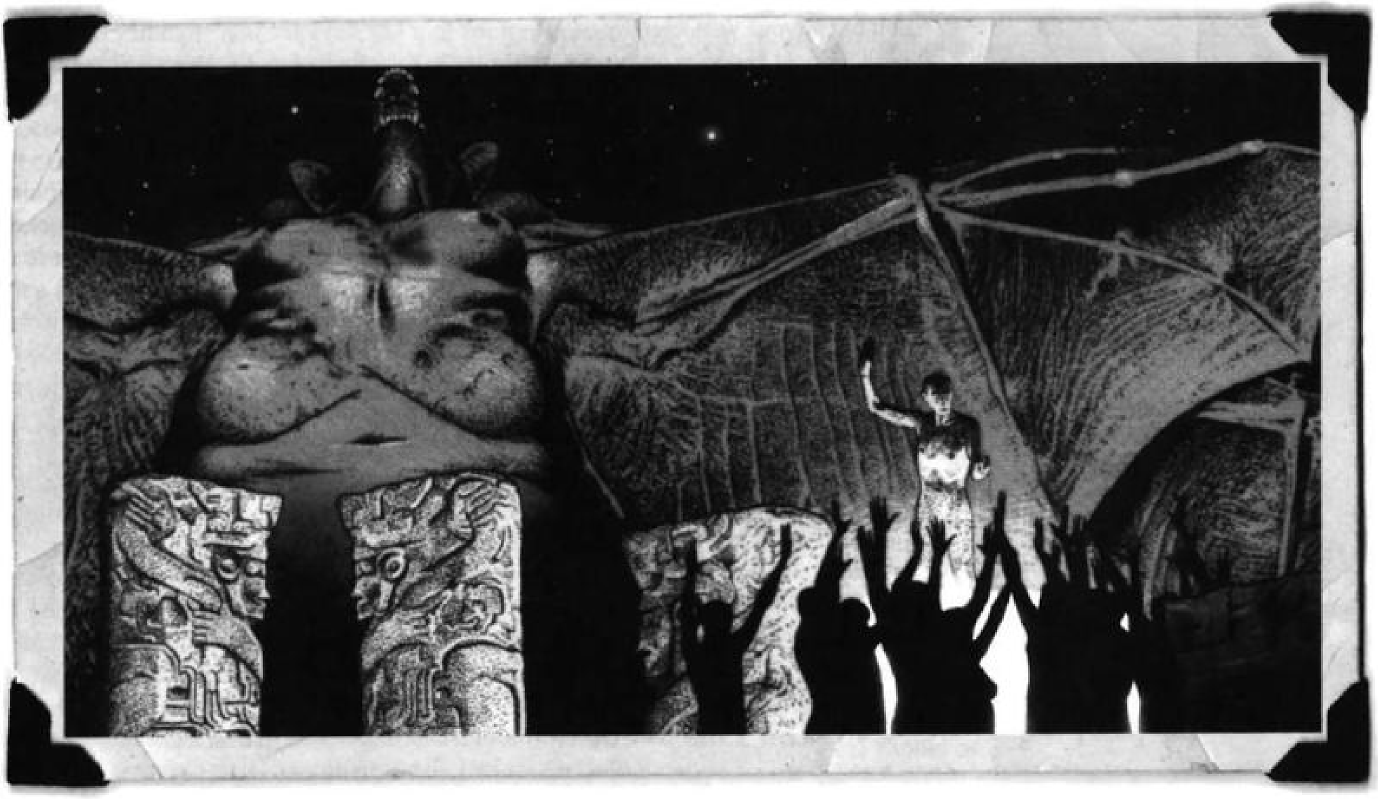
images of the great bats that served them, the stela became a major worship site for the highest members of the religious order. Powerful magicks were embedded within the stone of the stela, all primed with the blood of human sacrifices. The stela's magic was enhanced over the decades with the ultimate goal being to serve as a more effective shrine and perhaps even a pathway (ahem, gate) to their god. Camazotz was only too pleased at this.

While he is not, strictly speaking, a god or a supremely powerful entity, Camazotz received unusually large amount of veneration in Tulúm because of the great bats. The Winged Devils were useful servants to the priests. Camazotz, on the other hand, was a bloodthirsty entity desiring little good for humanity. The priests were not completely aware of the true nature of their god and didn't understand the dark and dangerous nature of the magic they were tampering with. In the final days of the bat cult in Tulúm, the priests demanded a final gory round of bloodletting in order to amass sufficient blood for the last enchantments on the stela. They got their blood, but at a terrible price. When they hauled off the captives, some of whom were of noble families, the pent up frustrations of the people, incited by the priests of other gods, exploded into violence. First, the cult and its trappings within the city were eradicated in a day-long bloodbath. Meanwhile, the priests on their way to the stela were completely oblivious to what was happening back home. They completed their ritual, but upon returning to the city, were immediately slain.

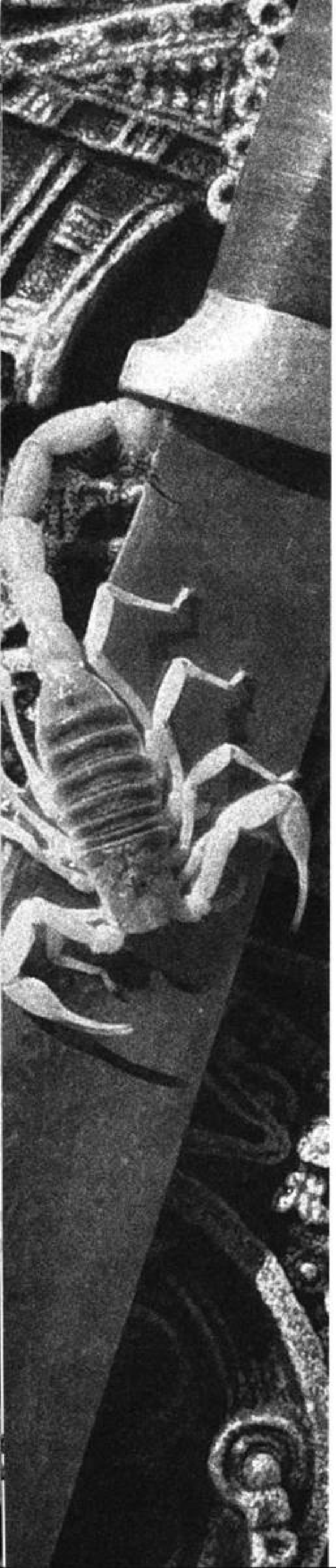
The ruins of Xamanik were immediately placed off limits by the rulers of Tulúm and dark stories about the area immediately began circulating. These stories have persisted in one form or another to the present day. While the history of the Cult of Camazotz and the nature of the Winged Devils has been lost in the mists of time, few have since dared to approach the ruins.

Camazotz

Camazotz is a frightening and quite gruesome entity in Mayan religion and legends. The *Popul Vuh*, a text written by the Quiché Maya soon after the Spanish invasion of Mesoamerica, provides some information on Camazotz and on how bats, particularly vampire bats, were viewed by the Maya. Described as the killer bat or the death bat, in Mayan renderings he appeared as a humanoid bat with crossed bones on his wings. His fearsome nature is evident and his greatest documented feat occurred when he tore the head off the hero twin Hunahpu. His status within Mayan religion is unclear. Whether he is a god or demon or monster is not told in *Popul Vuh* and no other source seems to document him beyond what is stated in that text. For the purposes of this scenario, the author has classed him (or, if preferred, the entity masquerading as him) as a powerful malign entity whose main (or sole) purpose is to consume the blood of humans.



Needless to say, Camazotz was not pleased with the fall of his cult in Tulúm. His goal to be released upon the world was nearly realized when his priests and followers were wiped out. All that remains for him to be released is to have a large quantity (at least two gallons) of fresh,



human blood poured onto the enchanted stela at the bottom of the Well of Sacrifice. This must be done within thirty minutes of midnight on either equinox or either solstice to have any effect. Since an average adult male human contains approximately eight pints (one gallon) of blood, an absolute minimum of two adult victims must be drained utterly dry in order to provide sufficient blood for the stela. Thus, a third and perhaps a fourth victim will likely be needed since it is difficult to drain such a substantial amount of blood from a single body.

A few days prior to each equinox or solstice, Camazotz awakens in whatever nether realm he normally inhabits and can influence those within a mile of his sacred stela. Traditionally, this is done through dreams. He can easily manipulate the Winged Devils who lack higher intelligence. While these huge bats are not in themselves malevolent, Camazotz is likely to employ them as terrifying servants for as long as he can. His control of the flock of Winged Devils is automatic and requires no die rolls on his part. Conceivably, other forms of lower animal life can be controlled just as easily, but Camazotz sees no use for them.

In the past, Camazotz has directed his Winged Devils to search the area in the vicinity of the ruins for victims. Unfortunately, at no time since the destruction of his cult has anyone wandered by on any of the four key days per year. Sending his servants farther afield has done nothing. Occasionally, they find a few suitable victims and manage to drain their blood. However, by the time they return to the stela, the blood has already been tainted by the digestive process. If more than five or six minutes passes or the bats have to fly more than a mile, the blood they bear is of no use. Were they to find victims nearby then vomit the blood immediately on the stela, that would be sufficient.

The arrival of the explorers in the area is Camazotz's first opportunity in centuries to accomplish his goal. His influence on them will be made apparent later in the scenario.

A Note of Caution

"The Well of Sacrifice" was from the outset designed to be a scenario that is introductory to The Mysteries of Mesoamerica. This does not mean it is intended to be introductory to Call of Cthulhu; it is far too lethal for that. Many Keepers may find that this scenario has a high lethality rate. Though that was not the author's intent, that is how it turned out in every playtest session. Out of the two groups of player characters who experienced this scenario when the author ran it, only one character survived and both times, Camazotz was released. The reader should probably bear this in mind and make appropriate allowances based on the amount of experiences the players have with the game.

A Grand Discovery

While conducting routine research in the Archæology Library in Mérida, one of the investigators stumbles across the crudely bound notes of a mid-nineteenth century explorer named Donald Stillbridge. The life of Stillbridge is shrouded in mystery. Obviously, his exploits, or at least those he claims to have occurred within these notes, never became public knowledge.

The notes are on coarse paper with a string binding. The front and back covers are each composed of two sheets of heavier paper that are glued together. These show great wear and tear and significant water damage. The contents were written by hand in black ink. Throughout, Stillbridge employed short, incomplete sentences that efficiently convey information and ideas. On the other hand, the book is a chore to read and is certainly not an entertaining work. Readers who peruse the contents can do so in four weeks minus the INT rating of the individual in days. A successful Read English roll will cut the time by half.

Readers can soon learn that Stillbridge was well travelled. He visited most major Mayan sites and many minor ones. He was obviously well versed in native customs and culture and was fluent in English, Spanish, French, and Yucatec and had a strong working knowledge of Portuguese and Italian.

In searching the notes, the investigator is likely looking for sites that appear interesting and deserve attention. Many, especially the major ones, are ones the group has already visited. Others appear rather mundane or seem to lack much of interest. One, however, stands out above the rest.

The site is Xamanik and according to the notes and crude diagram, it is located in Quintana Roo near the coast across the stretch of water between the Yucatán shoreline and the island of Cozumel. Once a thriving town and later a religious site, the ruins are now a collection of overgrown mounds and tumbled stones. Near the center is a large, overgrown cenote that, no doubt, was once the primary water source for the community. Stillbridge also documents the presence of a large "caracol" (astronomical observatory) much like that at Chichén Itzá. Long abandoned, even before the Spaniards arrived, the site has remained essentially undisturbed for centuries. Stillbridge reports stelae and monuments bearing crisp, clear Mayan writing, scores of relics and artifacts, and much more. Furthermore, he briefly interviewed Mayans living in the region about the site and all insisted they avoided the area for it was "bad land" and "haunted." Stillbridge dismissed this as the usual superstition, but concluded it was a positive sign. Since the natives obviously avoided the area, they didn't tamper with the site. Stillbridge's time there was short (two days: the 8th and 9th of July, 1889), but he reported that it was pristine. Everything should be relatively untouched and, therefore, ideal for a dig.

Stillbridge never excavated there. He drew a rough map of the site (map on page 101) and copied a few writings, but that was about the extent of it. The journal goes on to describe an assortment of other sites and then ends abruptly and without explanation. The last date is September 10, 1889 and at the time, Stillbridge was in the town of Mani.

While mysterious, there is nothing nefarious about this. He simply contracted a terminal tropical illness and died in Mani. There, he was buried by friends, a well known fact in the archæological community. His journal disappeared, though, and somehow wound up in Mérida a few years later. It has sat pretty much untouched ever since.

Donald Stillbridge

A noted (fictitious) explorer of the late nineteenth century, his passion was Mesoamerica, particularly Mayan areas. He is known within archæological circles as a kind of renegade who derided intellectuals ("deluded bookworms" was his pet term for them) and went out on his own to see first hand what the Mayan people were about. While his methods were criticized at the time, his results rarely were. Among modern Maya of the Yucatán, he could travel freely for he spoke their language and was well versed in their culture and recent history. His one and only formal publication was an article on the contemporary Mayan people that appeared in several archæological journals in the English speaking world in 1885 and 1886.

Though controversial, information Stillbridge made public about many heretofore unexplored sites turned out, often many years later, to be generally accurate. By 1914, many archæologists are familiar with Stillbridge and most, if confronted by his writings, will not quickly dismiss their contents as hogwash. Readers of this journal who are knowledgeable about Mesoamerican archæology will know about Stillbridge if they succeed in Archæology or Knowledge rolls (both may be attempted).

The Decision

Stillbridge's journal alone is a remarkable find. The fact the investigators have it gives them an advantage. They are the only ones who know of this previously unexplored site (except for Stillbridge's brief foray there) and thus can get a crack at it before other archæologists. An expedition can be planned and assembled within a few weeks (or possibly swifter if they are decisive and already have supplies and equipment on hand). Since they cannot conduct a dig (no foreign digs are being approved by the Mexican government at present), they can survey, sketch, photograph, and explore the site, thus assembling valuable information for the day when a large, well funded expedition can come. Perhaps the greatest attraction for them is the reported caracol.

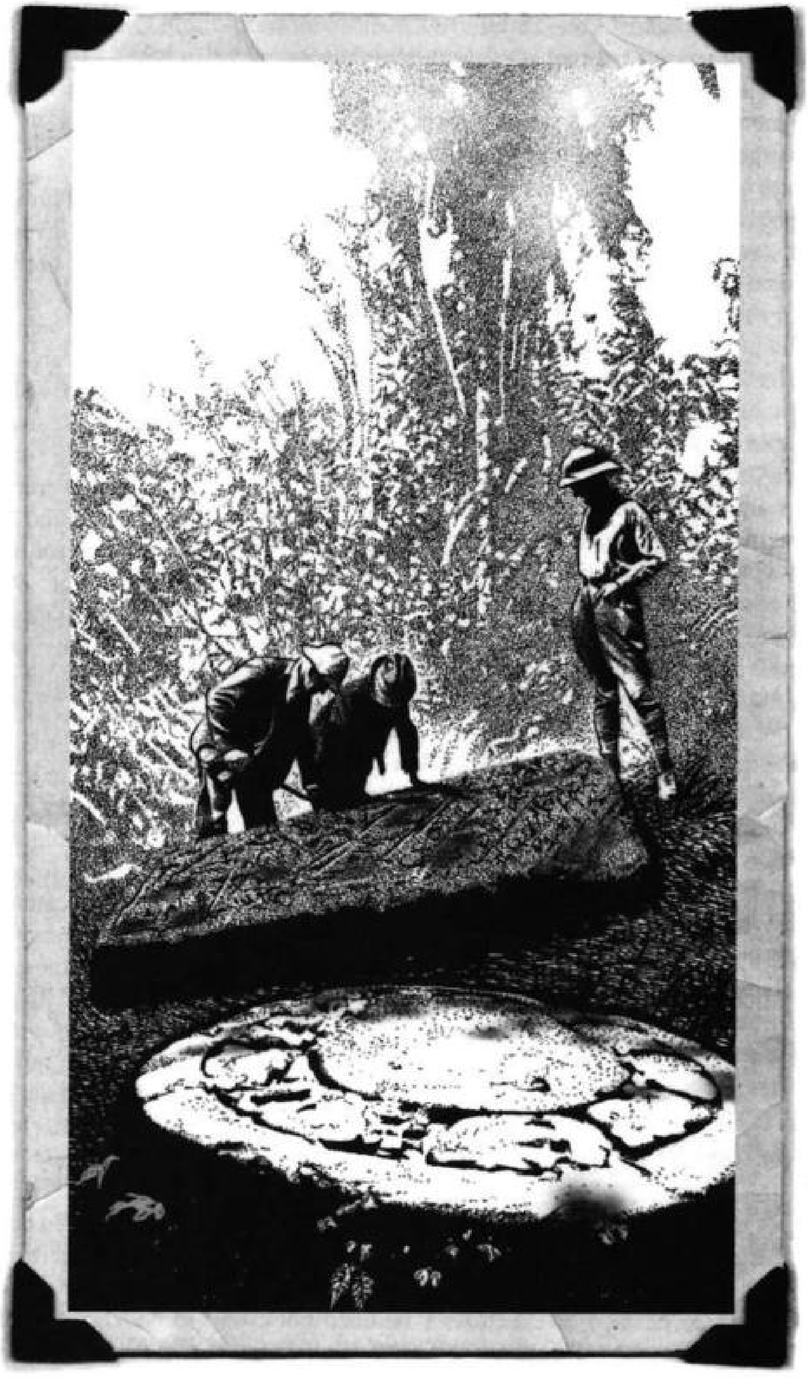
At this point, the Keeper must delay or accelerate the group's progress depending on what means of travel they choose. The ideal time for them to arrive is a day or two before the summer solstice (June 22). This will allow them to begin their activities, but not learn too much before Camazotz begins to influence them.

Marching overland is an arduous journey through thorny scrub forest. Water is a continual concern, but there are enough cenotes in the region that this is not a major problem. Simply getting across the peninsula is back breaking work so the group should travel lightly. Aside from the investigators, there should only be a burro or two loaded with supplies and necessary equipment. Since they have already been in the region for months, it can be assumed that they already have most equipment and only need time to acquire burros and replenish provisions and other consumables.

A second (perhaps more intelligent) option is to travel by hired boat to the general area of the site and then look from there. It is swifter, more comfortable, and less of a hassle, but is more expensive. It also means no burros can be taken so once they disembark their craft, all equipment and supplies would have to be hauled on each person's back. The town is not on the shore and may take some time to locate. Regardless of what option the group employs, they should reach the general area without major obstacles. Note that a kind Keeper could permit burros on board a coastal steamer, but transporting them would likely cost a fair amount of money.

The Area of the Site

Located across from Cozumel, the ruins are approximately one mile inland, just far enough to make it a problem to find. Intelligent investigators won't just start stumbling around the wilderness in the vague hope of finding it quickly. This tactic can work if the group is persistent, but will take a month or more to succeed. The best way of locating the site is to do what Stillbridge did...talk to area Maya. A scattering of family groups living off slash and burn agriculture can be easily found.



Interviewing local Maya can be a challenge. Few speak Spanish well or at all so an investigator or hired NPC fluent in Yucatec will earn his or her pay here. All know of the site though few have been anywhere near it. Dark legends and stories surround the site and no one dares approach it lest they suffer a horrible fate. Rumors of black magic and dark, ancient monsters abound though nothing concrete is laid out. These

Maya are obviously superstitious, but a successful Psychology roll also indicates they fully and truly believe the site is dangerous and should not be tampered with.

Any who are interviewed will urge the group to return to Mérida. However, persistent investigators will be rewarded with rough, but accurate instructions on the approximate location of the site. Following these and succeeding in a Land Navigation roll will allow them to find it easily. For each failed Land Navigation roll, it takes an extra day to find the site. Otherwise, it only takes 1D2 days. Note that this is only a guideline. The Keeper should maintain firm control here in order to ensure the group doesn't arrive too early or too late.

If the investigators take out some time to actually seek out more information than merely the location of the ruins, they will be rewarded with any number of fantastic tales of terror and woe. They will be told of spirits that haunt the forest seeking the souls of those who are sinful. The ghosts of the ancestors of the abused and exploited Maya of old also haunt the forest, seeking justice and sometimes revenge. Demons fly the skies at night on swift and silent wings, seeking to steal the life's blood of those who break a taboo or are sinful. Many such tales are told and the Keeper should feel free to launch these and/or several of his or her own creation at the investigators. An ethnologist among them will likely take notes on them for future reference (perhaps with an eye to publication), but other characters probably will simply listen out of interest or politeness.

As a side note, in real life the Maya of this region were not always friendly and could be downright hostile to strangers. The Keeper can use hostile Maya as a plot device to keep the players guessing or to increase tension, but it should be remembered that they also are (1) not the main focus of this scenario and (2) possess information the group needs and should not be overly afraid to seek out.

Ruins

Xamanik is easily spotted from the ground, but virtually impossible to spot from the air due to the lack of large structures and the dense nature of the vegetation. When the investigators enter it, they will find the area to be strangely quiet, as if all the creatures of nature were listening and waiting fearfully. Low, vegetation-covered mounds characteristic of other unexcavated sites are found here in abundance. Each conceals the broken remains of a stone building, monument, or hut. Most of the area is covered with plantlife, but bare stonework including stelae can be observed almost immediately.

Stillbridge's description of the site, and particularly the well, did not do it justice. The town was apparently oriented around a large cenote similar in appearance to the Well of Sacrifice in Chichén Itzá. Obviously, the well was once the one and only source of water, but a cursory inspection indicates it is now dry and overgrown with trees, shrubs, and weeds. Its depth cannot be easily gauged and would require someone to descend the treacherous and sheer sides. At this point, no one will probably even think to do this (though one playtest group immediately fixated on the cenote and lowered a man in before their camp was even set up).

Initially, the group will probably want to seek out the "caracol" reported to be here. They will be disappointed. It is nowhere to be found. This is because it has collapsed since Stillbridge's visit and now is one of many plant-covered mounds at the site.

The First Day

The first day will likely be spent establishing a camp within the ruins in order to make life more comfortable and more bearable. A site such as this will take weeks to properly survey and photograph and any epigraphers in the group will want to clear stelae and stonework of vegetation in order to copy writing.

Progress Begins

By this time, the Keeper should ask the players what their characters plan on doing. A general agenda of tasks to be completed should be assembled. There is much to be done. A surveyor may begin mapping the site, a task that will take quite some time. Photographers and sketch artists can occupy themselves for hours. It is the archæologists, particularly epigraphers, who are key initially. Presumably, they will take time to collect and examine artifacts, clear stones of vegetation in the search for Mayan writing, copy Mayan characters for later analysis and study, and so on.

Keeper's note: one playtest group never went through this process. While some NPC guides began to establish a base camp on the edge of the ruins, the PCs did a walk-through of the main portions of the site. They almost immediately fixated on the cenote and shortly after nightfall, they lowered a man into its depths. The Keeper should be prepared for such eventualities. In this case, it led to swift disaster for the group.

PLAYER CHARACTER

IAN RHODES MACGARRETT

Professor of Ancient Languages, epigrapher, cryptographer, explorer, marksman and outdoorsman,

Died July 10th, 1914

*"I must **see**...! I must **know**...!"*

Eureka!

The first great discovery is the one that will lead the explorers into trouble. While poking around for artifacts or new runes to copy, a startling discovery is made. Beneath some thorny brambles lies one of the many stelae that are scattered about the area. When cleared of nature's camouflage, a startled investigator discovers it is covered not only with runes, but with renderings of scenes of sacrifice, something heretofore unknown within the confines of Maya lore. On the three visible sides, the investigator can see what seems to be methods of sacrifices performed at different times of the year.

Remember that the Maya were not yet known for widespread human sacrifice so this find should attract the attention of anyone with knowledge of these people. Such a discovery is of obvious importance for it could result in a rethinking of theories prevalent at this time.

Those examining this object may attempt several skill rolls. First is Archæology. To be of any use for this specific instance, the individual must have at least 25% skill before he or she may attempt the roll (such a skill level demonstrates a basic command of the subject). If successful, the runes and artwork can be confirmed to be genuine and Mayan in origin. Most likely the stela was carved sometime during the fourteenth or fifteenth centuries, not too long before the arrival of Europeans in the New World.

Second is INTx3. This may be attempted on each of the three visible sides. The first is the side facing skyward. A successful INTx3 roll indicates the season depicted is most likely to be summer. The image is of a human sacrifice where the heart is removed and the body is skinned. The skin is then donned by a shaman who dances among the people who share the remainder of the corpse in a cannibalistic frenzy. This is a depiction of kind of a ritual of thanksgiving for a harvest that was plentiful. The side facing to the left (as perceived with the point of the stela being the top) shows a traditional sacrifice where the heart is cut out and shared among the priests who consume it as part of an offering to the gods. If the INTx3 roll succeeds, the depicted season seems to be spring. While they don't know it, this is a sacrifice beseeching the gods to grant the people a plentiful harvest. The side facing to the right represents autumn as a successful INTx3 roll will indicate. The scene is yet another heart removal, this time with the heart being burned within an urn and the ashes then being distributed among the priests. This is a ritual beseeching the gods to grant them a mild winter season.

The stela demonstrates high quality craftsmanship and the fourth side presumably depicts the sacrifice for winter. Hopefully, the investigators will take the time to turn the stela over. Otherwise, the Keeper may have to gently prod them to do so, probably by reminding them of the importance of this find. If all else fails, one of the investigators could have recurring dreams about this stela and the secrets on its hidden side. Turning it over simply requires the use of some ropes and levers and the efforts of two or three strong men.

When overturned, the discovery will be vital. Indeed it does portray the rites of winter. However, these do not involve the more common heart removal. Rather, the scene depicts priests hurling objects and human victims into the great cenote around which the town is built. Some of the objects are obviously precious in nature...gold, jade, and the like. The sacrifices of both objects and people was a means of placating the gods and wishing for the new year to be as prosperous as the previous one.

This scene should come as little surprise. Similar things occurred at the Well of Sacrifice at Chichén Itza, but that cenote is the only one confirmed to have been so treated. The cenote here is different in that it is dry so any artifacts hurled in might easily be obtained by industrious investigators.

While at the Site...

In the days immediately prior to the summer solstice, Camazotz is able to affect the area around the stela. As early as the 15th of June, he can control the bats and have them scout the region. At this time, he can also cause people within a few dozen feet of the cenote to have dreams, but only if they are sleeping. No visions will occur to anyone who is awake.

By the 20th, he can give all within a mile dreams. Those suffering from the dreams who are weak-willed or lacking in intelligence (or both) may fall under the influence of Camazotz. Only a relative few humans are susceptible. Anyone with an INT rating less than 7 can automatically be controlled by Camazotz (remember, the minimum INT rating for a starting player character is 8). Thus, intelligence is probably not an issue for the explorers. However, those with POW ratings less than 7 or SAN ratings less than 40 may fall under his spell. To find out if a target has succumbed to Camazotz's attempts at control, there are two formulae. If the reason is low SAN, the percentage chance to resist is equal to the victim's current SAN plus 25%. If, for instance, Scott has a SAN rating of 36, his chances of resisting would be 61% (36+25=61). If the target has a low POW, the percentage chance for him or her to resist is equal to five times the current POW. Thus, if Emily has a POW of 6, her percentage chance to resist is 30% (6x5=30). Victims who suffer both from low SAN and low POW must succeed in both rolls to avoid becoming a pawn of Camazotz.

Camazotz's mind games will cause dreams to all within the area of influence. Since the group is likely to arrive just before the summer solstice, the area of influence should be at its maximum radius of one mile. While awake, there is no effect. It is while the group is asleep that they are vulnerable. Those who resist the entity suffer from horrible nightmares. They will wake screaming in the middle of the night. In fact, it is entirely possible that all the investigators could wake screaming simultaneously. The nature of the dreams is up to the Keeper who should feel free to describe individually tailored dreams to each of the players (taking each aside is probably the best option). Typical dreams/nightmares can include violent scenes of human sacrifice, a cannibalistic frenzy at the base of a pyramid, or virtually anything else as long as it is Mayan or at least Mesoamerican in nature. Dreamers should in most cases be directly involved in the events being visualized. Thus, if an investigator is dreaming of a sacrifice atop the great Temple of Kukulcán at Chichén Itza, he may be experiencing it from the perspective of a priest, the victim, or perhaps even an average citizen. SAN loss for dreams is 1/1D6 for each is vivid and striking. If this seems too harsh, the Keeper may opt to simply not describe any dreams at all. Rather, the victims could simply awake screaming, but immediately forget their terrifying experience. SAN loss in this case would be a mere 0/1D2. A Keeper with a vicious streak might toss in physical evidence of a dream such as a bruise above the heart region for a person who was in the process of being sacrificed in their visions.

A victim who falls under the influence of Camazotz will be the only one who does not awaken screaming. He or she will be manipulated by the entity for the rest of the scenario, acting as a spy and ultimately as an agent for him. This individual may assist the Winged Devils in their attack or may take measures alone. The Keeper has myriad options here.

Next Step

The next step is obvious, or at least should be. Viewing the scenes on the stela should make the investigators realize that the now dry cenote contains objects of great value, both monetarily and historically. Historically speaking, they are aware (each may attempt a Knowledge roll that automatically succeeds unless fumbled) of a man named Thompson who dredged the Well of Sacrifice in Chichén Itzá and was rewarded with numerous precious artifacts.

Keeper's note: the clues on the stela may not be necessary. All playtest groups that went through this scenario immediately recognized the potential importance of the cenote and were at least contemplating a descent even without any clues leading them there.

Descending the cenote, though not easy, can be accomplished using ropes and simple climbing gear. If a block and tackle was brought along, then the job is that much easier. The walls are sheer and lack firm handholds, making a climb without gear nearly impossible. Anyone hoping to free-climb the walls must first already have 75% or more Climb skill then succeed in eight rolls at only twenty percent of the normal chance. It would be next to a miracle for this to succeed.

Presumably the group will properly plan and equip themselves for this venture into the unknown *(Keeper's note: unless the group specifically stated they were leaving such useful items as rope and pitons behind in Mérida, it can be assumed that this is included in the standard gear they brought along.).* Anyone descending will plunge vertically eighty feet before entering weeds, trees, and bracken that cover the floor of the well. The vegetation is quite high; in most places it reaches up fifteen feet or more. Anyone descending into it will, therefore, completely disappear from the sight of those at the top. From the rim of the well to the bottom is a distance between ninety to one hundred feet.

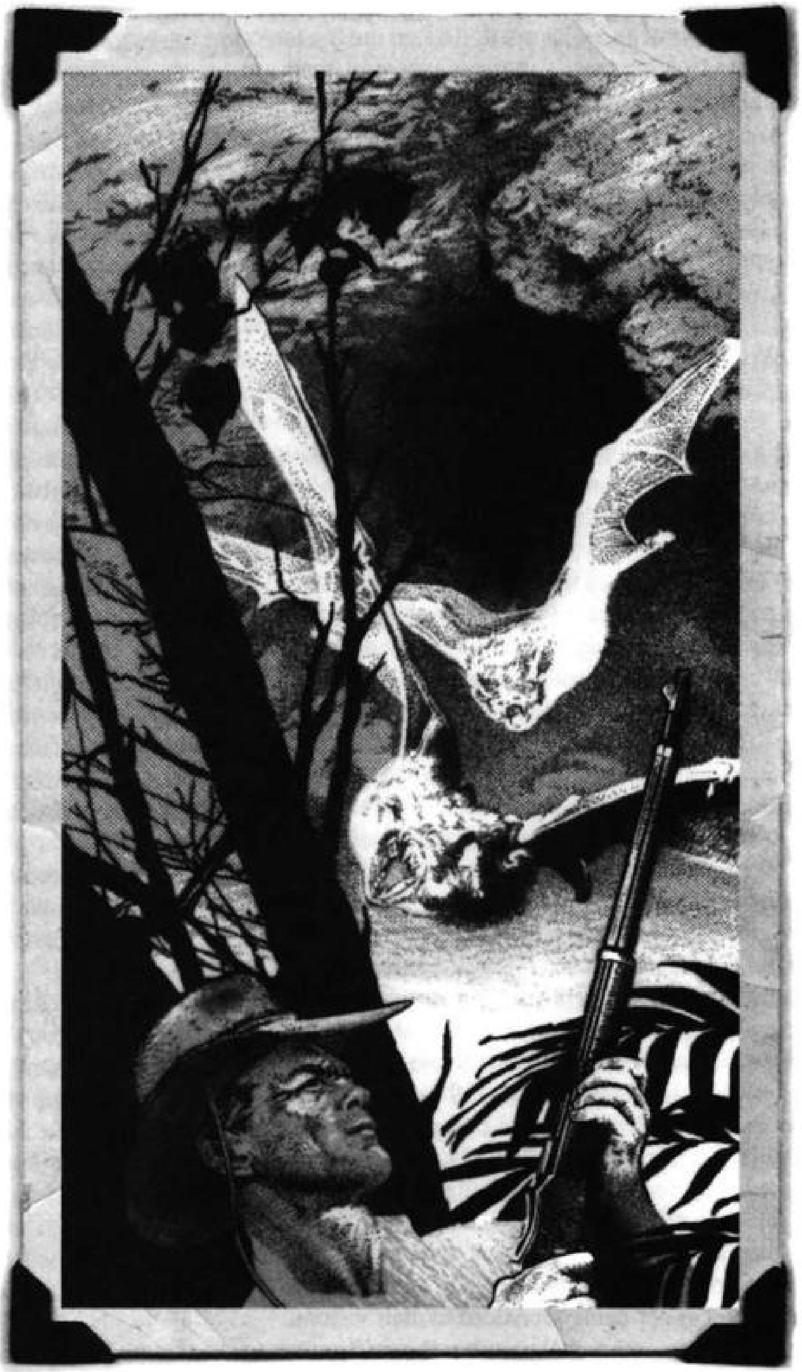
Once on the floor of the great cenote, the individual or group is in deep shadow because of the sheer sides of the well and the thickness of the vegetation. If it is nighttime, it is pitch black. A lantern or flashlight will adequately light the immediate area, but movement is difficult because of all the brambles. A little work with a machete can make movement much easier.

Initial exploration of the cenote yields little. At this point, the Keeper can demand Spot Hidden rolls, but regardless of how good they are, nothing comes of it initially. No items or human remains can be found on the surface. However, several things will soon be obvious.

First, the sides are honeycombed with crevices and caves. A successful Geology roll indicates these were probably eroded out long ago by the flow of ground water through porous limestone. In other words, all appear to be

of natural origin.

Second, a strange, pungent, fecal smell is rather strong down here. A successful Knowledge roll reveals this to be the odor of bat guano (people who are new to the Yucatán and/or exploration should have a negative modifier to this roll). Obviously, some of these caves are home to bats. All the investigators by this time know of vampire bats and know them to be small, harmless creatures that alight on cattle and other livestock to drain blood. The amount drained will not harm a bovine, but they are known to carry disease. Attacks on humans are rare or nonexistent so this is not something anyone should be concerned with. The presence of bat guano on the cenote's walls and on the vegetation soon becomes obvious once they watch for it.



Third, while there is nothing just laying out on the ground to be picked up, excavating the soil may be worthwhile since presumably, items hurled into the well while it was full of water would have been covered by years of silt. The group may begin planning for this.

Fourth and finally, there is one very obvious thing that should be noticed soon by any explorer who is being thorough. In the exact center of the cenote is a stela. Obviously, it must have been placed here after the well went dry. Measuring ten feet in height, a canopy of vegetation extends over it, concealing it from observation from above. Stelae are common in Mayan sites and this one seems to be a fairly typical example. Further examination reveals some interesting facts. On it are carvings of the Winged Devils. Some are of these creatures attacking humans while other carvings show priests conducting human and animal sacrifices to them. The dominant carving, one that is evident on each side near the top, is a great image of Camazotz. Archæologists and authorities on Mayan religion will be confused by the presence of the Winged Devils. The pictures are much too large to be a known real life creature so PCs should conclude that it must represent a deity of some sort. Conjecture at this point is premature, but the discovery should spawn new interest in this site in general and the well in particular. Camazotz, on the other hand, may be recognized by those familiar with ancient Mayan religion. Those who qualify as authorities on the subject (Keeper's discretion) need merely succeed in any one of the following rolls to know that Camazotz was a monstrous killer bat of legend: Archæology, Anthropology, History, or Occult. Only one of these rolls may be tried, but the player may choose which one to employ (presumably one with the highest percentage rating). Those who are amateurs on the subject, but still have some knowledge, may attempt one of these rolls at half the normal chance. Those lacking any knowledge at all have no chance of identifying the image even though they may have a smattering of points in one or more of the above skills.

As was stated earlier, this stela is enchanted. At most times, it is a simple piece of stone, but on solstices and equinoxes, it alters slightly. Anyone touching it with bare skin will feel that area of his or her body begin to itch slightly. The itching sensation increases the longer the exposure persists. When the individual's hand or fingers or whatever are removed from the stone, a bright red patch (blood from the victim) can be seen on its surface. Worse, when the skin is examined, it is completely coated with the person's blood. Pain is slight and is more itching than anything else. This effect causes the loss of 0/1 SAN to observers and the victims of this phenomenon sustain a SAN loss of 1/1D4.

What happened is the stone, in its need for blood to satisfy Camazotz, tried to feed directly on the warm skin of the victim. It literally drew blood through the skin and onto the stone. No wounds are visible, but the victim does feel as if his or her skin has been pierced by thousands of incredibly tiny needles. Bleeding stops once the skin is removed from the stela and there are no ill effects other than the itching. This sensation subsides after an hour or so. In the mean time, if the blood is not simply washed from the stone, astonished observers may note that it gradually disappears over the span of a few minutes, as if it is being absorbed into the stone. SAN loss for witnessing this is 0/1.

In the unlikely event a person intentionally places a bare hand on the stela and keeps it there, eventually damage is done. After five minutes, one hit point of blood is lost. One minute after that, a second hit point is lost. After that, blood is lost in ever increasing amounts (1D3 is lost in the next minute, then 1D6, then 1D10, then 2D20). The damage stops when the appendage is removed from the stone. Someone trying to commit suicide in this manner will probably fail for he or she would lapse into unconsciousness first, thus falling away from the stela and losing contact with it. In short, damage caused by this effect should not reduce the victim below one hit point unless he or she is unfortunate enough (perhaps determined by a Luck roll) to slump against the stela and remain in contact with it. Gloves and clothing will protect a person from the blood draining effect so no one should be concerned if someone casually brushes up against the stone.

The stela is key to Camazotz's plans and is essentially irreplaceable since it took decades for well trained and well informed priests to enchant. One way for the investigators to win is to destroy the stela. Dynamite is the swiftest method (a single stick will shatter it beyond repair), but a few minutes work with a stout pickaxe is sufficient to ruin it forever.

Delving into the Unknown

Checking the well further and in greater detail, the explorers will soon make new discoveries. Some of the caves are large enough to admit a man and one is large enough to easily ride a horse into. This cave entrance obviously is a major egress for the bats living within. Guano covers the stone in a fairly dense layer. The pungent odor is unpleasant, but tolerable. Anyone familiar with zoology will (with a successful Zoology, Biology, or Knowledge roll) know that entering a cave full of bats during the day is reasonably safe as long as the creatures are left undisturbed.

If the investigators choose to enter, they may miss an interesting clue. The stone is covered with bat guano. If they choose to scrape aside the guano at ground level at the entrance, they will find the cave opening is flanked by two censers (pottery incense burners). When covered in guano, they appear to simply be stones. Cleaned up, each is a small, Mayan style statue of a bat-like demon (Camazotz). Each is twenty inches tall and a bowl shaped depression in the top of the head is where incense or charcoal was burned. If the area around the entrance is examined, a successful Spot Hidden roll may reveal the censers. If the entrance is ignored, there is little chance they will be discovered (a generous Keeper may allow each investigator who passes through the entrance to attempt a Spot Hidden roll at 20% of the normal chance of success).

Inside the cave, the explorers are assailed by the

stench of the bat guano in even greater and more offensive levels. Each should attempt a CONx5 roll. Those who fail must leave to catch their breaths, but may return to try again after a few minutes. The cave itself is large and empty. Most of the far end is flooded and to reach the other side, one must walk through murky, unwholesome water. The depth is knee deep in most places and waist deep at the center. Fortunately, the bottom is smooth stone and easy to walk on. Two tunnels extend out of the far end of the cave. The larger of the two is virtually coated in bat guano while the other tunnel is a mere crawlspace that can admit no one with a SIZ rating greater than 15. Note that backpacks and other gear will increase one's size for the purposes of this crawlspace; a large backpack might add two points to SIZ.

Both tunnels run roughly parallel and exit in a second cave which is also covered with bat guano. This cave has obviously been altered by the Maya. A successful Spot Hidden roll reveals the floor has been smoothed and covered with fine flagstones. A great altar stone is in the center of the cave and appears to be a sacrificial block of some sort, suitable for butchering humans or animals. The one obvious feature is what is clinging to the ceiling...perhaps two score huge, albino bats, the "Winged Devils" of legend. They are described in detail in the section entitled "Winged Devils." Aside from the two entrances already mentioned, there is a third across the cave, past the altar. It is a dark, five foot wide tunnel perhaps six feet high.

At this point, the investigators have to make some basic decisions. Their main options are:

(1) Retreat immediately instead of entering.
(2) Sneak into the cave to investigate.
(3) Sneak across the cave to the unexplored tunnel.
(4) Shoot the bats.

Option #1 is the safest by far. If they simply peer into the cave then quietly retreat, the bats will be unaware of them and they will avoid any immediate danger. Though normal sized bats are not considered a threat to humans, no one is known to have encountered bats of such size before.

Option #2 allows the group to examine the altar and the rest of the cave for artifacts and Mayan inscriptions. They are safe as long as they succeed in Sneak rolls. If anyone fails a Sneak roll and a groggy bat succeeds in half of its Spot Hidden roll (three bats may try this in any given round of action), the bat takes notice and emits a shrill note of warning. The group has a round or two to act and presumably they will flee rather than fight. More on the escape and what can be found in the cave is given in the next section.

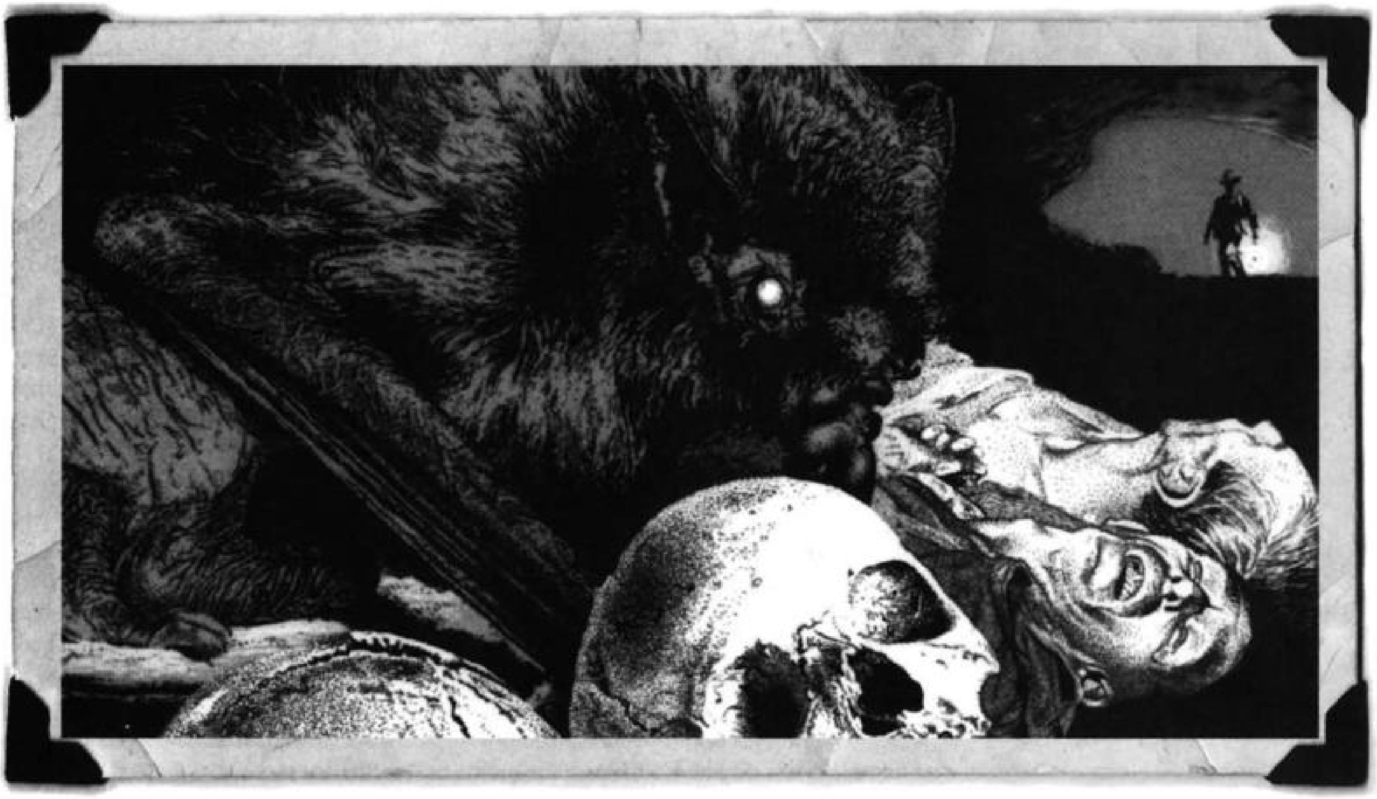
Option #3 is similar to #2, but is less risky. If they simply ignore this cave and slip into the opposite tunnel, they will have to make only a few Sneak rolls, thus reducing the time in the cave and the chance of being observed.

Option #4 is both ludicrous and insane. The group can feel free to try to kill all the bats, but when a few dozen winged creatures the size of calves are hurtling at them, they will soon realize they will all die. Fleeing at this point is probably useless though some might escape if others hold their ground and give their lives in a desperate rear guard action.

The Cave of the Winged Devils

This has been their home since before the Spanish conquest. No longer are they tame or docile. They are hungry critters out for blood. They are also highly territorial which means they will attempt to kill anything or anyone that comes into the cave. They may disregard creatures outside the cenote, but anyone staying in the ruins for a prolonged period (more than a few days) will most assuredly be noticed and subject to a nighttime attack.

Long ago, the bat-cult made this cave the center of their worship. Only the highest ranking priests were allowed access or even knew of this. The natural cave was converted to a temple and sacrifices to the Winged Devils were carried out here as well as in the ruins above. The floor was covered with flagstones and the altar was specially made in order to be able to handle a variety of livestock as well as humans. The walls from floor level to five feet were decorated in colorful frescoes that are largely gone now due to environmental conditions, the bats, and their guano. However, patches of frescoes remain and can be found if searched for. They resemble frescoes found at Tulúm that are perhaps that city's best feature. These depict many traditional scenes of sacrifice over which presides the ever present bat-god. Observers may attempt the same rolls they could at the stela outside to realize that the largest depiction is of the killer bat Camazotz, an obviously feared Mayan entity. Whether here it is being portrayed as a monster or god is unclear.



Lining the walls are a variety of small, guano-covered artifacts that blend into the stone and are hard to notice. A deliberate search will be rewarded with perhaps fifty objects (less if Spot Hidden rolls are failed) ranging from urns containing hearts of sacrifices to small statues and censers. All are in reasonably good condition since they have sat untouched for centuries. Cleaning them of bat guano will be a challenge, but can be accomplished at a laboratory or even in a base camp that has the proper tools and materials.

The Vault

This was a storehouse for the priests of the Cult of Camazotz. With their great bats outside to guard it, they were secure in the knowledge that anything placed here would remain unmolested by marauders, rivals, and thieves. Within can be found a dozen pottery vases and stone urns containing an assortment of objects the priests felt were valuable. This includes religious paraphernalia, codices, and even pieces of unworked jade (considered very precious by the ancient Maya). Durable items such as gold and jade have survived intact and largely in good condition, but codices are useless. Two dozen are present, but the damp atmosphere has caused the pages to become fused together. Perhaps some future technology can be found to salvage them, but for now, none can be read. The final item here is a set of clay pipes that is designed for use in the spell Summon the Winged Devil.

The Escape

Surviving the caves is a challenge. If the group is detected, the Winged Devils will attempt to kill them all since they are a highly prized food source. Better yet, if it is near the time the blood is needed for the stela, the bats will be controlled to some extent by Camazotz who will be highly motivated to have at least three victims to serve as blood sources. Their only hope is to escape the caves and reach the safety of daylight. The bats will not venture out until night even if they are under control of their malevolent master. This potentially gives the group plenty of time to be miles away before sundown.

Within the caves, there are two areas of relative safety. One is the crawlspace through which a human or smaller Winged Devil may crawl, but the human will move

faster. Furthermore, in the crawlspace, a well armed individual may be able to kill a bat crawling after him or her, thus blocking the passage and allowing his escape to the other end. Of course, the bats are likely waiting at both ends for him so this may end up as a siege. A person bottled up in the crawlspace may have to be rescued by his friends.

A better place of safety, though only a temporary one, is the pool of water in the first cave. There, people moving through it who see Winged Devils sweeping in for the attack can simply duck under the water and be entirely protected. Of course, this only lasts so long as one can hold his or her breath. However, good timing may permit a person in the pool to dash across the open, dry rock to the sunlit entrance before a bat can dive in for the kill.

Once in the well itself, the group is safe as long as the sun is shining. They can simply climb out and flee the area. If they do not, they will be subjected to a deadly attack soon after nightfall. Conservely, if it is already evening when they exit, as it was during one playtest session, then they are probably doomed.

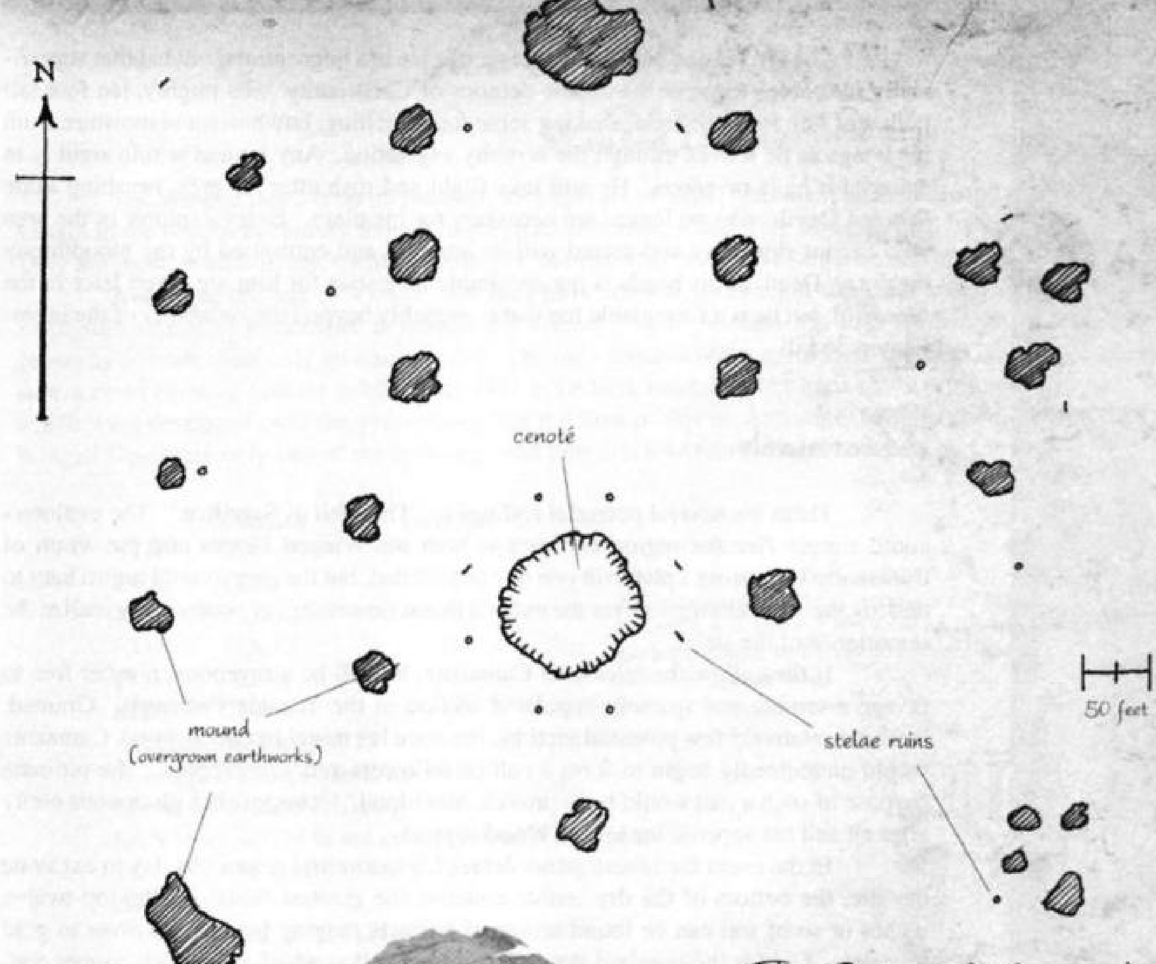
The worst case situation is where the group decides to search the caves at night. If they do this, the bats will not be restricted in their movement and can chase them out of the caves and into the dry cenote. In such a situation, the investigators are unlikely to survive. Worse, if it is the evening of the summer solstice, they have fulfilled Camazotz's greatest wish by making themselves available for blood sacrifice.

Note that the Winged Devils do hunt every night. They will not, however, molest the investigators the first night unless they are camped in close proximity to the cenote. Even then, they probably won't bother the group since they are the only candidates for the upcoming blood sacrifice. Once they have disturbed the bats or once it is the evening of the solstice, the Keeper should feel free to assault them with the bats. A nighttime assault should be unnerving since all the explorers will see is pale, shadowy forms gliding on huge, silent wings. Seeing a person actually being enveloped and bitten by a huge bat is probably worth a SAN loss of 1/1D4. Finally, if the group manages to avoid all this yet is still in the ruins nights after the solstice, the bats will consider them to be legitimate targets for dinner. At such a time, they are not under Camazotz's control, but instead are simply doing what comes natural…hunting for food.

The Release of Camazotz

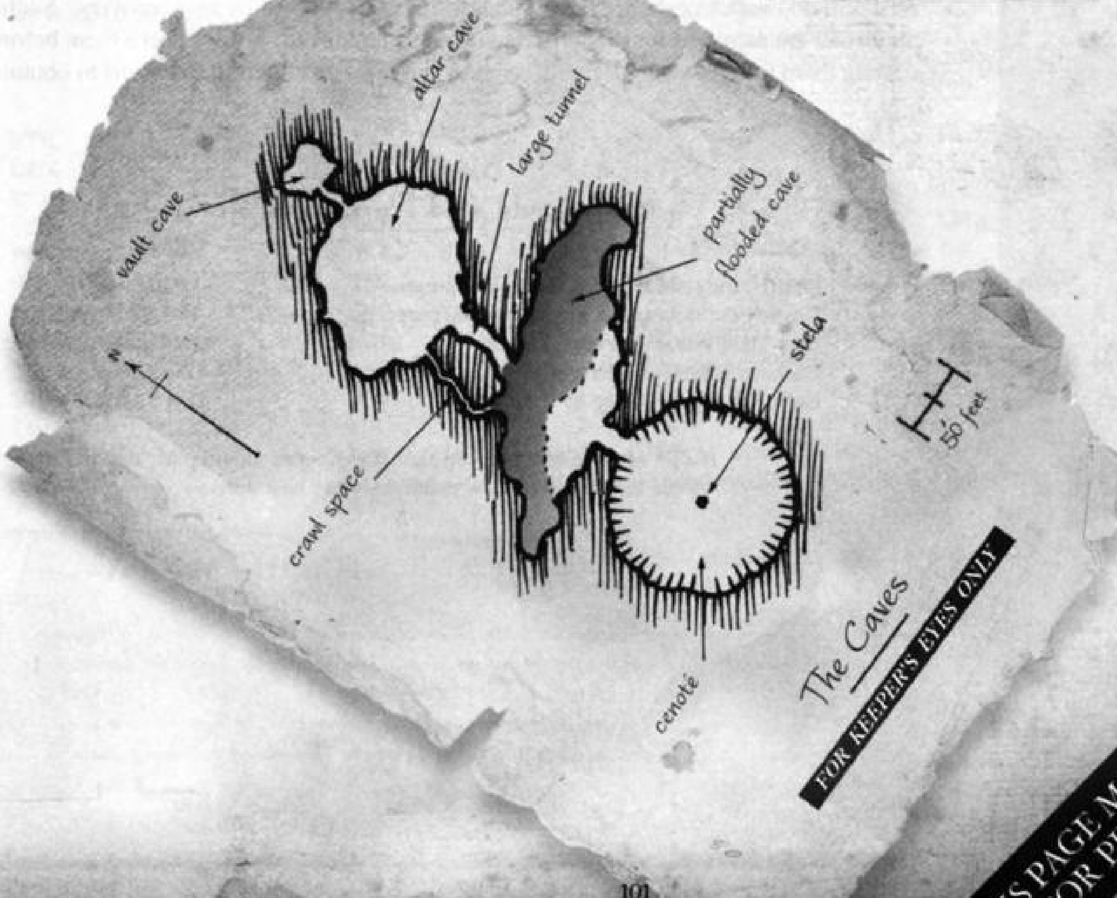
This only occurs, of course, if the investigators completely blow it (which, sadly, happened during both of the author's playtests). In such a case, Camazotz's release will come swiftly and violently. When the bats attack, they will strike the investigators (who are presumably either camped or attempting to flee the area) in several waves. The first will simply try to prevent escape. If the group is small, the bats may just try to overwhelm them with force of numbers. No more than one bat may bite a human in a single round and one who is successful will envelop the target with its wings. The struggling victim will not only have to contend with blood loss each round, but restrictions in movement. How the Keeper handles this is dependent on the nature of the victim, how he/she is equipped and acts, and whether or not anyone is available to come to the rescue.

Once a victim has been drained entirely of blood, the bat will immediately release him/her and take to the air. It will fly directly to the stela, hover above it or cling to it, and vomit the blood onto the surface of the stone. Note that the bats can touch the stela without suffering ill effect; only humans have their blood drained by touching the enchanted stone. Once two gallons (or more) have coated the surface, the process begins that will lead to the release of Camazotz. The blood is absorbed into the stone at the rate of one pint per round. Once sixteen pints have been absorbed, the stela becomes a gateway to the nether region in which Camazotz resides. At any time up to the point that the sixteenth pint is absorbed, a die hard investigator could conceivably rush up and remove a portion of the blood (too bad a fire hose isn't available) by scraping or washing it away. If enough is removed, the gateway will not open and Camazotz will be foiled. Camazotz will, of course, be aware of this and will direct any Winged Devils under his control to intervene.


N
cenoté
mound
(overgrown earthworks)
stelae ruins
50 feet

The Ruins of Xamanik

FOR INVESTIGATORS USE


vault cave
altar cave
large tunnel
partially flooded cave
stela
crawl space
cenoté
50 feet

The Caves

FOR KEEPER'S EYES ONLY

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The arrival of Camazotz is not pretty. He is a huge, humanoid bat that superficially resembles some of the classic demons of Christianity. His mighty, ten foot tall bulk will step from the stela, shaking some foul-smelling, unwholesome moisture from his wings as he moves through the scrubby vegetation. Any human within sight is in danger for he is ravenous. He will take flight and rush after his prey, brushing aside Winged Devils who no longer are necessary for his plans. Every explorer in the area who cannot slip away undetected will be attacked and consumed by the bloodthirsty creature. Death at his hands is not inevitable (statistics for him are given later in the scenario), but he is a formidable foe that is probably beyond the capability of the investigators to kill.

Aftermath

There are several potential endings to "The Well of Sacrifice." The explorers could simply flee the region and escape both the Winged Devils and the wrath of Camazotz. Camazotz's plan will one day be fulfilled, but the group could return later to destroy the stela, ending forever the entity's threat (assuming, of course, they realize the importance of the stela).

If they allow the release of Camazotz, he will be a ravenous monster free to ravage a remote and sparsely populated section of the Yucatán Peninsula. Granted, there are relatively few potential victims, but once his initial hunger is sated, Camazotz would undoubtedly begin to form a cult of followers and worshippers. The ultimate purpose of such a cult would be to provide him blood. Camazotz is a gluttonous entity after all and his appetite for human blood is great.

In the event the investigators defeat Camazotz and return one day to excavate the site, the bottom of the dry cenote contains the greatest finds. In the top twelve inches or so of soil can be found scores of artifacts ranging from flint knives to gold bracelets. Gold is the standard poor grade Mayan alloy which has a high copper content, giving it a reddish hue. No human remains are found since the high acid content of the soil has long since dissolved away all bone. However, those artifacts that are recovered will do much to enhance the reputations of any involved in their recovery. Sadly, almost all are damaged for in sacrificing objects, the Mayans always broke them before casting them into the well. Regardless, they are prizes well worth the effort to obtain.

SAN
Rewards and Penalties

Action	Result
Destroy the stela knowing its general purpose	+1D10 SAN
Destroy the stela suspecting its general purpose	+1D8 SAN
Each slain Winged Devil	+1D4 SAN*
Each investigator killed by the bats	-1D3 SAN
Each investigator killed by Camazotz	-1D4 SAN

* If a lot of these creatures are slain, the Keeper should put some sort of cap on how much SAN can be gained.

Inserting the Mythos

In the event the Keeper is more inclined to make this a Cthulhu Mythos scenario, one simple change can be made in order to accommodate this desire. Instead of the Winged Devils, Night Gaunts can be substituted. This will make the scenario a bit more dangerous, even if fewer Night Gaunts are used than Winged Devils, but such a change may make this scenario more palatable to some readers.

New for *Call of Cthulhu*

Winged Devils

The Winged Devil is an increasingly rare species of huge, albino bat that has eluded modern science. Few flocks remain in the twentieth century though in previous centuries, some were domesticated by pre-Columbian Mayan priests. They are most prolific in the Yucatán Peninsula, but can also be found elsewhere in Mexico as well as Central America.

Averaging the size of a small calf, they have smooth, translucent white fur and wingspans of up to fifteen feet. Their sole source of sustenance is human and animal blood. Ancient bat cults formed around them and these would generally provide them only humans as food. The only source known to mention them is Garret Carr's *Zoologist's Addendum*, a poorly printed volume published in 1911 in Oxford, England. The book saw a printing of only 101 copies, many of which were destroyed over the years (though at the time of this scenario, most copies should still be in existence). The Winged Devils are only one of many strange and rare species described and sketched by Carr in this book.

	Statistics	Average
STR	2D6+8	15
DEX	2D6+4	11
INT	1D6	3 to 4
CON	2D6+8	15
POW	2D6	7
SIZ	2D6+8	15

Average Hit Points: 15

Average Damage Modifier: +1D4

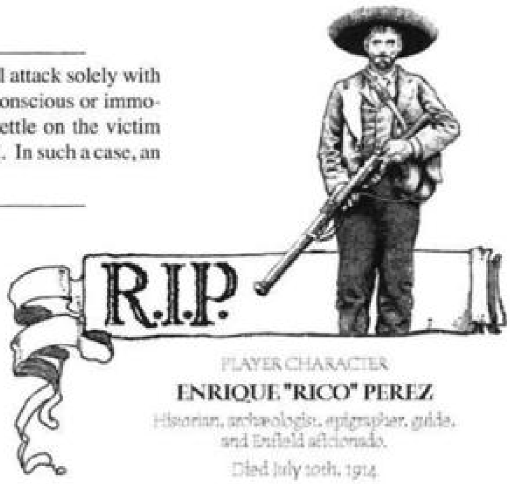
Move: 2 on land/12 flying

SAN loss: 0/1D4 to see an individual Winged Devil
or 1/1D6 to see a flock

Attacks:

Bite 20%; 1D4+dm damage
Blood Drain automatic; 1D4 STR per round

Note: The Winged Devil will attack solely with its bite unless the victim is unconscious or immobilized, in which case it will settle on the victim and begin to drink his/her blood. In such a case, an attack roll is unnecessary.



PLAYER CHARACTER

ENRIQUE "RICO" PEREZ

Historian, archaeologist, epigrapher, guide, and Enfield aficionado.

Died July 10th, 1914

"Que demonios! Muevete!! Muevete!!"

Below are nine sample Winged Devils. These statistics may be recycled as needed or supplemented with stats of the Keeper's creation.

	Aggressive Devil	Average Devil	Arthritic Devil	Brawny Devil	Elder Devil	Grotesque Devil	Horrific Devil	Pallid Devil	Terrible Devil
STR	16	15	10	17	12	14	14	11	16
DEX	15	11	6	9	12	10	15	13	14
INT	4	4	2	3	6	3	3	5	3
CON	16	15	10	17	13	15	13	12	18
POW	8	7	4	4	11	6	6	2	3
SIZ	15	15	12	17	14	14	14	14	16
Hit Points	16	15	11	17	14	15	14	13	17
Damage Modifier	+1D4	+1D4	+0	+1D6	+1D4	+1D4	+1D4	+1D4	+1D4
Move	2 on land / 12 flying								
Bite Attack	31%	20%	15%	21%	22%	20%	28%	19%	19%
Listen	91%	90%	78%	71%	95%	89%	85%	81%	80%
Spot Hidden	36%	30%	20%	33%	38%	29%	25%	40%	29%
SAN Loss	0/1D4 for viewing an individual or 1/1D6 for seeing a flock								

Special:

- The Arthritic Devil will retreat if he suffers any individual injury of three hit points or more. He will return to the fight or hunt after recuperating for several minutes to a few hours (Keeper's discretion).
- The Grotesque Devil possesses a particularly frightful visage. SAN loss for seeing him is 1/1D6 rather than the usual 0/1D4.

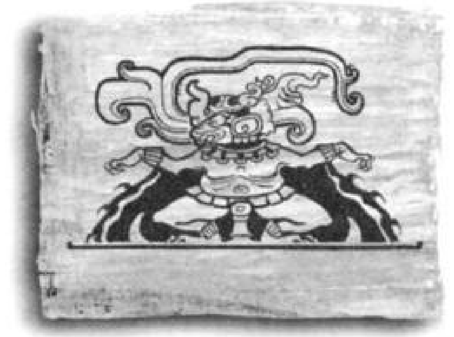
Winged Devils are the creation of writer Glen Taylor. They first appeared in the article "A Zoologist's Addendum" in Issue #12 of The Unspeakable Oath. They are used in this scenario with his kind permission.

Summon the Winged Devils

This ritual requires the blood sacrifice of animals totalling at least ten SIZ points and a few repetitive notes played on odd pipes. The spell will only have an effect if cast at night in Central America or Mexico. Outside of the Yucatán Peninsula, the chance for success is halved. 10D10 Winged Devils will respond and all will be thirsty. No binding version of this spell is known though one may have existed in ancient times. Of course, in ancient times, some Maya had domesticated these creatures, making binding spells unnecessary.

Use of this spell requires the caster(s) to expend one magic point per ten percentiles chance of success. Thus, if one expends four magic points, there is a forty percent chance of a successful summoning. For each spell point used, the caster must chant for five minutes, playing the notes on the pipe intermittently. 2D10 minutes after the chanting concludes, the flock will arrive. SAN loss for using this spell is 1D3 and that does not include the standard 1/1D6 for seeing a flock of Winged Devils.

Camazotz, the Killer Bat



Camazotz is a frightening and gruesome bat-god in Mayan religion and legends. The *Popul Vuh*, a text written by the Quiché Maya soon after the Spanish invasion of Mesoamerica, provides some information on Camazotz and on how bats, particularly vampire bats, were viewed by the Maya. In texts written prior to the *Popol Vuh*, the name Zotzilaha Chimalman has been applied to him. His lair is the so-called "House of Bats," a dark cavern which is on the route to the realms of death and darkness.

This otherworldly entity appears for all intents and purposes to be some twisted, slavering, malevolent, humanoid bat. In some ways, it superficially resembles some artistic portrayals of the demons of Christianity. Possessing a strange composite body, its torso and limbs are somewhat human while the head, hands, and feet are those of a great bat. Leathery wings drape from the arms below the wrists and are fully functional, allowing the entity to fly at a fairly swift pace. This should be impossible, of course, and will surely confuse zoologists and anatomists who view the monster. Each dark wing bears a marking that strongly resembles two crossed human arm or leg bones. Topping his mighty, ten foot tall bulk is a head bearing a frightful visage. Beneath the piercing, malevolent eyes is a snout and a set of jaws, both of which are extremely effective weapons. The rock hard, razor like nose has been described as being much like a flint dagger and can be used to slice open or even decapitate prey. Powerful jaws contain enormous teeth that can easily tear apart prey. His hands bear a set of highly effective and dangerous claws.

The dread god's status within Mayan religion is unclear. Whether he is a god or demon or monster is not told in the *Popul Vuh* and no other source seems to document him beyond what is stated in that text. For the purposes of horror roleplaying, he can be classed as a powerful malign entity whose main (or sole) purpose is to consume the blood of humans.

STR 30
DEX 10
INT 12
CON 30
POW 22
SIZ 24

Hit Points: 27
Magic Points: 22
Damage Modifier: +2D6
Armor: 2 points of leathery hide; automatically heals 1 hit point for each hit point of blood it consumes.
SAN Loss: 1D6/1D20
Move: 6 walking/11 flying

Attacks:
Bite 40%; 1D6+dm damage
Snout 60%; 1D8+dm damage
Claw 40%; 1D6+dm damage
Wing Bash 65%; 1D4+dm damage
Grapple 50%; STR versus STR on Resistance Table to break free; if Camazotz wins he may (1) automatically bite and drain 1D6 hits per round until death occurs (a grappled opponent is fully enveloped in his wings) or (2) automatically bite the head off the victim (assumes no larger than adult human size)

Notes: Camazotz may attempt only one of the above attacks in any given round.

Spells: Clutch of Nyogtha, Dampen Light, Summon/Bind Nightgaunt, Summon the Winged Devils, Wither Limb, Wrack, plus whatever spells the Keeper feels is fitting for this entity.

1914

■ New moon
● Full moon
▼ Solstice
▲ Equinox

January

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	●	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	■	27	28	29	30	31

February

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	●	11	12	13	14
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22	23	■	25	26	27	28

March

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22	23	24	25	■	27	28
29	30	31				

April

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12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	■
26	27	28	29	30		

May

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17	18	19	20	21	22	23
■	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

June

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21	▼	■	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

July

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19	20	21	■	23	24	25
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August

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23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

September

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13	14	15	16	17	18	■
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27	28	29	30			

October

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18	■	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

November

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	■	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

December

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	●	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	■	17	18	19
20	21	▼	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

MENHIRS IN THE GROTTO

Brian Appleton

Introduction

It is fall semester in the year 1923. In recent months, construction workers digging near Texcoco, Mexico, have unearthed what appears to be the upper most part of a stela appearing to be Aztec in origin. One of the workers, a man named Antonio Hernandez, became extremely excited about the find and reported it to the local professors at the University of Mexico City, much to the displeasure of his boss, Emilio Herrera. The Investigator's benefactors (whether it be a large university or a special research group such as the Carnegie Institute) upon hearing this news were quick to react and have made contact with academic officials at the University of Mexico City. Through these contacts, they have arranged for a joint dig to commence in late September with equal acknowledgements going to both organizations working on the dig. All antiquities found are to remain in the hands of the Mexican officials, but the Investigator's benefactors have made special arrangements for a showing to be conducted at their institute. The archaeological team is to contact and meet Dr. Carlos Calderon at the Museo Nacional de Antropología when they arrive in Mexico City.

Background

In late July, construction workers working for one Emilio Herrera, a local business owner, unearthed the top of a stela which is part of the ruins of an ancient

Aztec site while laying a foundation east of Mexico City on the outskirts of the ancient town of Texcoco (see map). This small shrine is the ancient site of dedication and sacrifice to the Aztec goddess, Coatlicue (which has yet to be determined when the archaeological team arrives in Mexico). In actuality, it was an ancient site of worship to Shub-Niggurath. It was built near Lake Texcoco, the Lake of the Moon according to the Aztec mythology, to channel energy for the rites performed for the goddess.

The cult dedicated to Coatlicue has almost all but died out except for a remote few who worship in the outlying countryside. This group is led by a beautiful Mexican woman named Conchita Moreno who is the assistant to Dr. Calderon and who also grew up near Texcoco. She is very dedicated to the worship of what she perceives as Coatlicue, one of the mother goddesses of the Aztec religion. She has a small following of local cultists, but her greatest ally is the previously mentioned Emilio Herrera who uses his political influences to further their mutual cause. Emilio, unbeknownst to Conchita, is a secret worshipper of Nyarlathotep in his guise as Tezcatlipoca, or "Smoking Mirror." Emilio has also been bestowed the power to assume the likeness that his god sometimes takes, that of a jaguar. Emilio is in fact a were-jaguar as portrayed by many Central and South American religions. Emilio believes that there is a direct correlation between Tlaltecuhtli birthing Tezcatlipoca to Shub-Niggurath birthing Nyarlathotep. This is something he theorizes based on the legends of Mother Goddesses within the context of Mesoamerican religions. (See the section on "The Mother Goddesses" for more information). The ultimate goal of the cultists is to unearth the worship site and complete the Rebirth Ritual of Conchita.

Preliminary Research

Before the archaeological team leaves for Mexico, they will probably want to do some last minute background research on the area. All and all, they will only find what they already know concerning the history and religion of the Aztecs if a successful Library Use roll is made. However, if an Investigator makes twenty percent of a Library Use roll, he finds a small book written in Spanish entitled *La Sierpe y el Tigre*. Translated into English this means "The Serpent and the Tiger." This book describes in multiple legends the details of the power struggle between the cults of two of the Aztec's main gods - Quetzalcóatl and Tezcatlipoca. The one curious thing of the book is that it describes a battle in which the gods fought each other in their nauallis, or animal forms, with Quetzalcóatl transformed into a plumed serpent and Tezcatlipoca transformed into a jaguar (the Spanish initially called all large cats in the New World *el tigre*, or tiger). The book is written in Spanish by an anonymous Franciscan friar, circa 1530, obviously from the time of the Spanish conquest of Mexico. The book conveys +1D2 Occult and +1 Anthropology. It takes 20-INT hours to read.

Travel to the Site

The journey to the site will be a relatively straight forward experience. The Investigators will take a liner from their point of embarkment (most likely Boston or New York) to Veracruz, Mexico. There, they will take a train from Veracruz to Mexico City to meet up with Dr. Carlos Calderon on September 23.

Once at the University of Mexico City, Dr. Calderon will give them a briefing of what has been discovered at the site. So far the archaeological team has uncovered most of the first stela. Dr. Calderon believes that it is definitely Aztec in origin. The stela depicts various fertility scenes including offerings to the corn god, Cinteotl, and other corn rites. The stela is unusual because the main body of the stela is made of basalt whereas the top is shaped in the form of a four-sided pyramid made of transparent obsidian. The basalt and the obsidian are connected somehow, it just cannot be determined how they are connected. Dr. Calderon has never seen or heard of anything like this. A successful Archaeology roll will lead the Investigators to believe that nothing like this has ever been found before.

Dr. Calderon will also introduce the Investigators to his assistant, the lovely Conchita Moreno. She is a graduate student working under Dr. Calderon to get her Masters in Archaeology. She is a dedicated worker trying to get ahead in a profession that is not necessarily female friendly.

Investigators have all day on September 24 to do as they see fit as Dr. Calderon makes final preparations to return to the digsite. This may be gathering whatever supplies they might be lacking (or have forgotten), or it might be doing some last minute research. The Keeper might want to allow the Investigators another chance to find *La Sierpe y el Tigre* here.

On the morning of the 25th, everyone meets up at the University of Mexico City and drives out to the digsite in a truck borrowed by Dr. Calderon from the university. The truck is a Ford with a flat bed and wooden panel sides.

In Warm Blood

A number of interesting tidbits have happened before the archaeological team arrives. This information may be disseminated by Dr. Calderon. First of all, Antonio Hernandez, the worker that originally reported the site, was killed on September 10 outside of his house while he was doing chores in the late evening. His death has been reported to have been caused by a wild animal attack. He is survived by his widow Ana. See the section entitled "The Events" for more details.

Also, minor excavation has already begun on the

site and an artifact has already been found on September 23. It is a small figurine of jade approximately one foot in height that is fashioned in a style similar to other artifacts that have been recently found on the eastern Gulf coast near Trés Zapotes (determined if a successful Anthropology or Archaeology roll is made). It is a blockish figure which appears to be a human face caricatured with having sagging jowls and pointed canine teeth. That night the campsite was mysteriously raided and one of the diggers, Miguel Benevides, was found the next morning apparently clawed to death by a wild beast. Incidentally, Miguel was the lucky digger who discovered the statue.

Fortunately, the figurine was not stolen. Once the Investigators arrive, they may see this artifact. A successful Biology (or Zoology) roll will determine that the characteristics of the face seem very feline. A successful Archaeology roll will identify the statue as that of a Rain Baby - a blocky, child-like figure associated with the rain and prosperity. A successful Anthropology roll or a successful Occult roll will lead the Investigator to believe that the figure is that of a were-jaguar, a creature that was highly revered by many Central and South American civilizations. If correlations between Aztec gods are asked by the Investigators, an Anthropology roll made at half or an Occult roll made at half will determine that the Aztec god, Tezcatlipoca, sometimes took the form of a jaguar. If the diggers are questioned, a successful Persuade roll (in Spanish) will have one of the diggers state that he saw a dark, shadowy form rush out of the camp immediately after he heard the death scream of Miguel. Miguel's body was horribly mutilated as if by an animal. Some speculate a jaguar might have done this, but that would be an extremely rare occurrence.

Dr. Calderon will be notified of Miguel's death on the eve of September 24. As a manner of professional courtesy, Dr. Calderon will "request" the presence of the Investigators to attend the funeral. On the morrow, there will be a funeral service and burial of the deceased. The services will be held at the Church of La Morena in Texcoco.

The Funeral

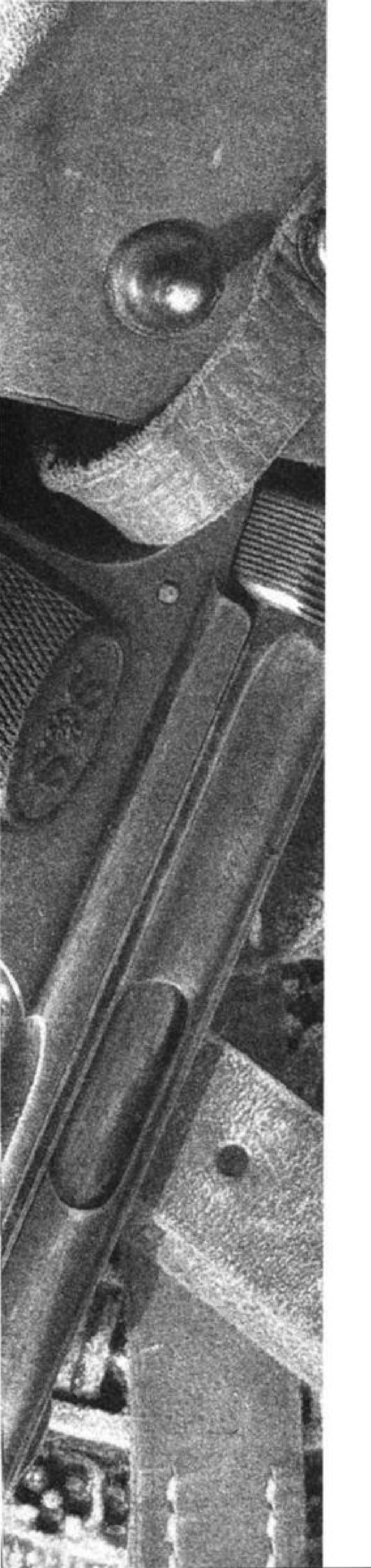
On the morning of September 25, Dr. Calderon drives the archaeological team into Texcoco to the church for the funeral of Miguel Benevides. Dr. Calderon wears a nice, black suit to the funeral and Conchita wears a long, black dress accented by a purple and scarlet head scarf, and a necklace made of gold, turquoise, and pearls. Dr. Calderon "insists" that the team dress appropriately.

Miguel's eulogy by Father Ignacio Perez is fairly routine except for two instances. In the first, Father Perez alludes to "an evil amongst us." He also later in the eulogy calls the digsite an unholy pagan site.

After the funeral, the Investigators may be able to meet with Father Ignacio Perez. They may be very curious concerning the statements that Father Perez made during his eulogy. He will not elaborate on his beliefs at this grieving time. But if the Investigators come to him at a later date and give Father Perez good reason to trust them, he will possibly open up and tell them what he knows. See the section entitled "Church of La Morena" for more details.

The Investigators may meet Maria Benevides, widow of Miguel, but only long enough to give condolences. Father Perez will keep her under a protective wing and make sure she is not further bothered on this day of grief.

It is also possible for the Investigators to meet with Ana Hernandez, widow of Antonio. She is extremely saddened by the loss of her husband. She is deeply upset by the circumstances surrounding the death of her husband and believes there is something happening "out of the normal" in the area around the digsite. Ana blames Emilio for Antonio's death although one will have to succeed in a Persuade roll in order to elicit this information. She will state that he was killed in total darkness (a reference to the New Moon). His body was found horribly mangled and torn apart. This is all of the information that she knows.



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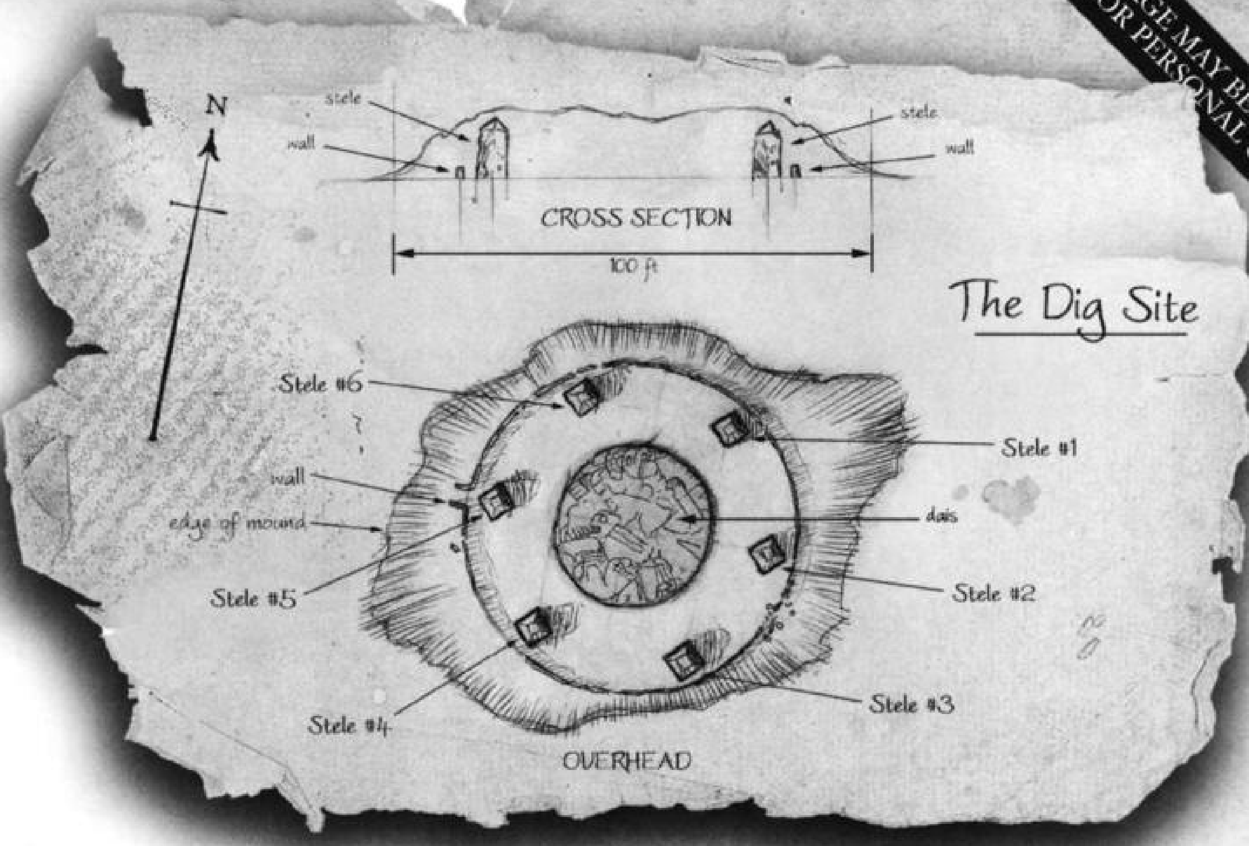

The Digsite

After the funeral, the archaeological team needs to discuss and decide amongst themselves as to how to approach the details of the excavation of the site. The site itself is a rounded, shallow sloping mound approximately a hundred feet across with a height of approximately ten feet at the apex. The mound is fairly level on top, especially in the area from the edges of the stela inward towards the center.

The most logical course of action will be to form a grid pattern on the mound and probably either 1) start digging a trench from the base of the mound towards the uncovered stela, 2) level the mound from the top towards the base, or 3) excavate the ground adjacent to the stela. If the team follows the idea of the trench, they will discover a low stone wall about one foot high approximately 5 feet from the edge of the mound. A successful Idea roll will reveal that the wall, if completely intact, most likely encircles the interior of the mound. If the crew decides to level the mound, they will discover the tops of the six stelae at approximately the same time - surely all on the same day. If the workers try to completely excavate the stela first, they may meet difficulty when the sides of their hole begin to collapse down upon them. If they do manage to dig a hole around the stela, they will find that the stela is approximately nine feet, or three meters, high and firmly embedded in a layer of stone at the base.

The Keeper should now keep careful track of time in the schedule of the dig. The entire digsite will take approximately a month to to be completely excavated. The Keeper should determine what is discovered through the actions of how the Investigators conduct the excavation. The Keeper should also remember the events detailed below that will happen according to the timeline and mix them in accordingly.

The Campsite

Dr. Calderon has decided that for efficiency he would set up a temporary camp at the site to house all the workers, to be an onsite base of operations for tasks such as cataloguing or sketching, and to store all of the equipment needed for the excavation. The camp is set up just south of the mound, about 25 yards away.

There are tents set up for all of the members of the excavation. Dr. Calderon and Conchita Morena each have their own tent. There is five tents to house the ten dig workers (nine now). There will be a tent erected for every two Investigators with females given separate tents from the males. Each of the tents set up for the diggers and for the Investigators will have two cots, two bedrolls, and mosquito netting in them. The tents of Dr. Calderon and Conchita are similar except they only have one cot within each. Everything else in these tents are the personal effects of the individuals (and there is nothing out of the ordinary).

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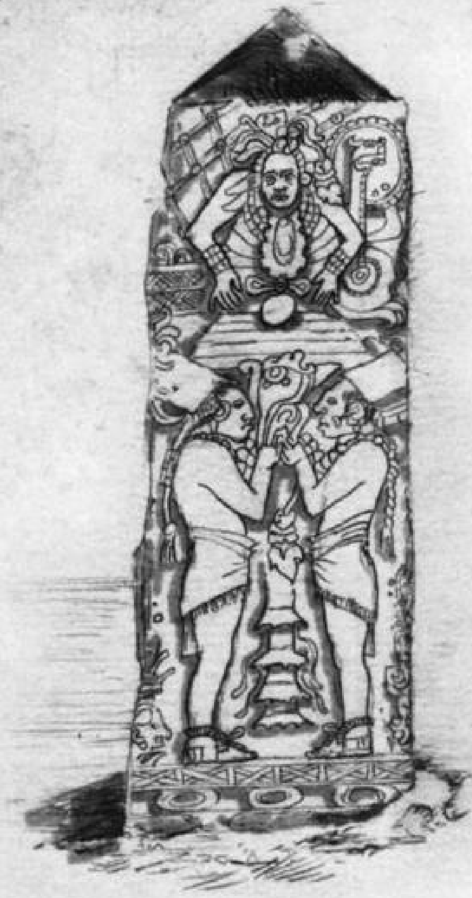
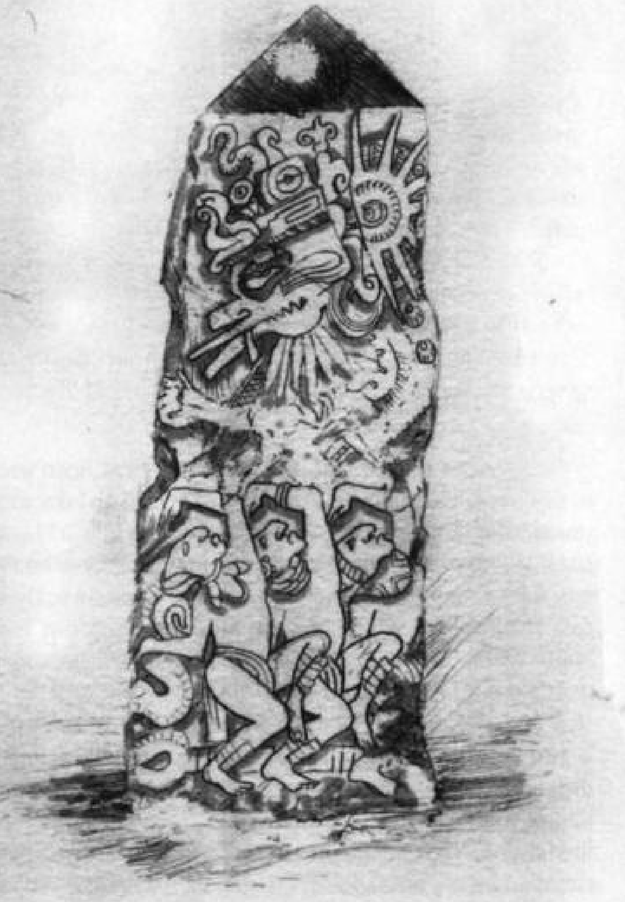
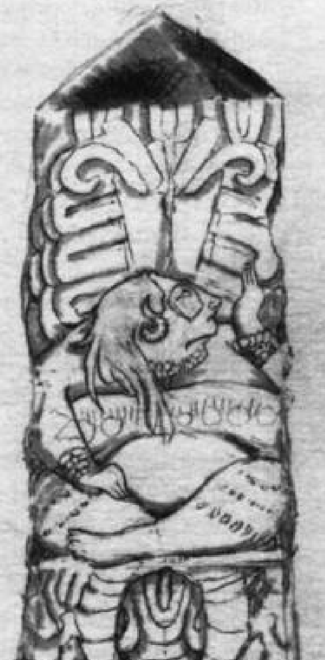


STELE 1 -
Various fertility scenes including
offerings to the corn god, Cinteotl,
and other corn rites.



STELE 2 -
Praises to Quetzalcóatl
in his wind-form of Ehécatl
to bring winds carrying rain.



STELE 3 -
Depictions of a hugely
rotund, pregnant woman.

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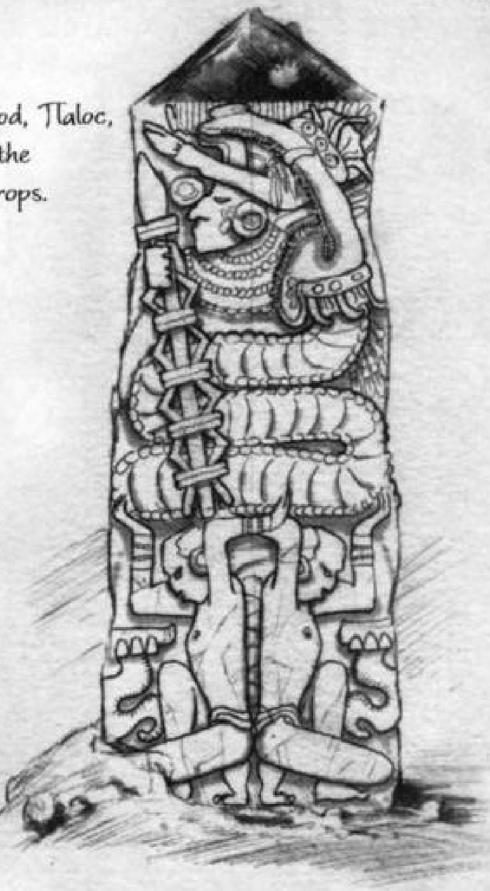
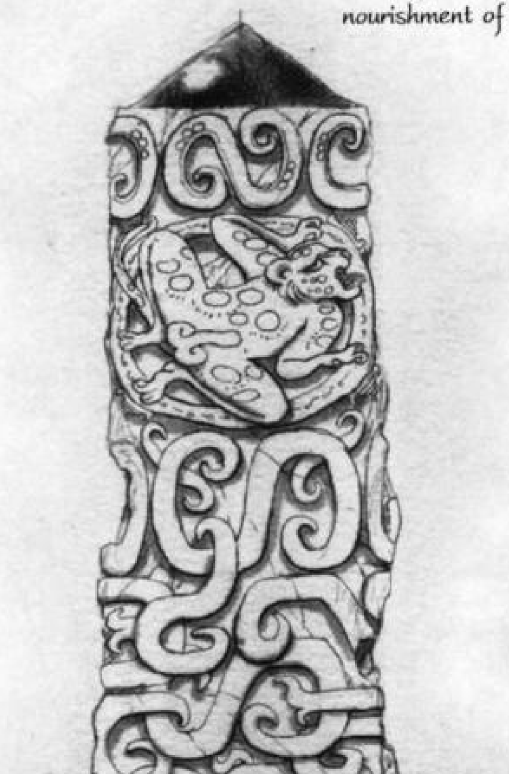
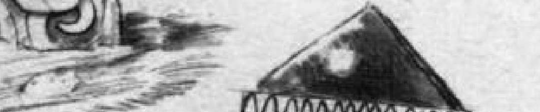
STELE 4 -
Praises to the rain god, Tlaloc,
to bring showers for the
nourishment of the crops.





STELE 5 -
Fresco of a water jaguar
with an enlarged phallus
representing fertility.

STELE 6 -
Fresco of Tlaltecuhtli
giving birth to Tezcatlipoca.



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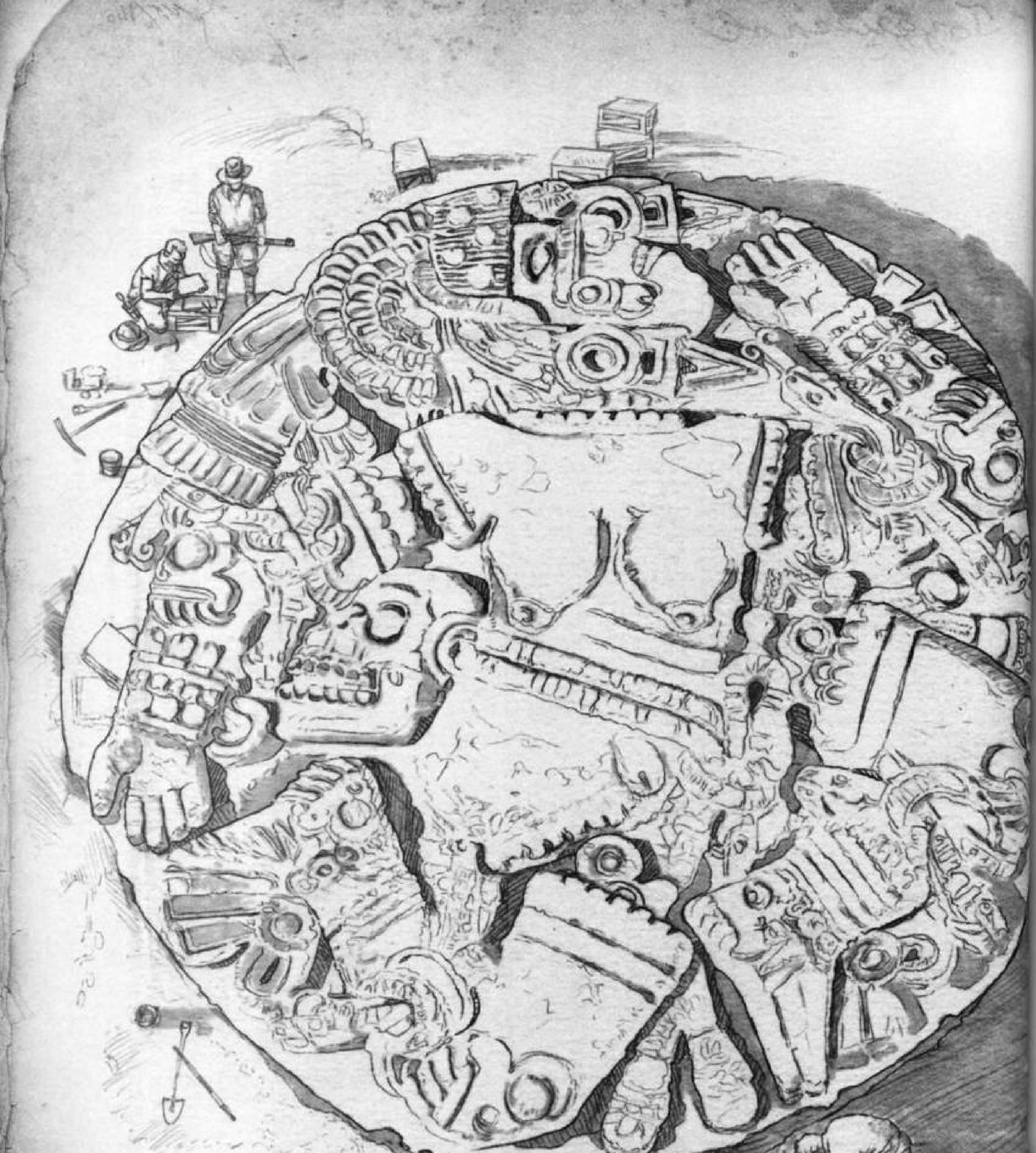

~ *Center of excavation site, dais depicting the dismemberment of Coyolxauhqui.*

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There is also another tent erected that holds all of the equipment for the site. This includes 10 shovels, 5 pick-axes, 10 trowels, 10 small brushes, other assorted tools, a wheelbarrow, 3 lanterns, lantern oil, 2 coils of 50 feet of rope, 2 snake-bite kits, extra provisions, lumber, messkits, and a machete. There is a water barrel near this tent. There is a campfire site with stove and spit set up in the middle of the camp.

During the entire time of the excavation, the Keeper must make clear that several things are understood by the Investigators. First, Dr. Calderon wears a .38 Smith &Wesson revolver in a flap holster on his side and Conchita wears a .22 Colt semi-automatic handgun at all times during the waking hours. If asked about these, they will respond that there are always bandits about and one should protect himself. This should not seem unusual, and the Investigators probably do this as well especially if they have been in Mexico before during the more troubled times of Mexican government. The second thing to be noted is that people do not just stay in the camp. Dr. Calderon (and the Investigators if they want) travels to and from Mexico City a couple of times a week. Conchita sometimes goes to her home on the edge of town (yes, she will not be at the campsite on the night of October 10) (New Moon) or on October 24 (Full Moon).

Mother Goddesses

In the legends of the Aztecs, there are many entities that can be considered "Mother Goddesses" or "Earth Goddesses." As told in the story on page 115, Coatlicue was believed to be the mother of Huitzilopochtli. Yet the myths, the stories, the legends seem to blur at times. During research, the author found sources that claimed Tezcatlipoca was born from the exact same story told above. But it was also found during research that Tezcatlipoca was born from the earth monster, Tlaltecuhtli.

There are similarities amongst many of these goddesses. Coatilcue was known as "She of the Serpent Skirt." This is amazingly close to the meaning of another Earth Goddess called Cihuacoatl whose name literally means "woman-snake." Cihuacoatl was an Earth Goddess associated with childbirth and midwifery, and it is claimed that she overlapped with many of the other goddess such as Teteoinnan, Toci, Tlazolteotl, and Tlamatecuhtli (See section on "Deities and Monsters of Mesoamerica" for more information about these goddesses). Were all of these goddesses just different manifestations or avatars of some central Earth Goddess?

The Discoveries

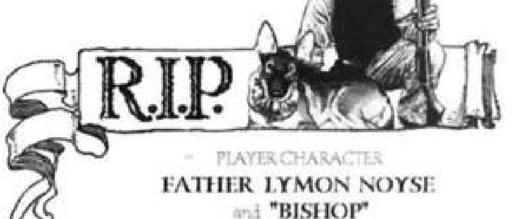
The most visible discoveries at the site will be the excavation of the six standing stelae. They are approximately nine feet, or three meters, in height. With a successful Geology roll, it can be determined that each stela is carved out of basalt except for the top which is a four-sided pyramid composed of obsidian. The two types of stones are connected but it can not be determined as to how this is. If proper measurements are taken along with a successful Astronomy, Engineering, Mathematics, or similar roll, it will be found that the points of each side of the pyramid exactly coordinate with the cardinal points. [Keepers note: The obsidian pyramids act as a channelling device similar to a moon lens which aids in the summoning of Shub-Niggurath. These six "mirrors" collect the moon light and transfer the power to the similar six pyramids that lie within the grotto on Emilio's estate. These will be detailed later.]

Each of the six stelae convey a common theme - the theme of fecundity, fertility, fruitfulness. They each have various picturesque carvings on them that relate to this theme. Refer to the map of the digsite to determine which stela is discovered.

Each discovery of a stela should have a successful Anthropology, Archaeology, and/or Occult roll made to determine the significance of its carvings. [The Keeper should consult the side drawings and permission is given to photocopy them to use as player aids.] Stela #1, the original stela that was found, has various fertility scenes including offerings to the corn god, Cinteotl, and other corn rites. Stela #2 depicts praises to Quetzalcóatl in his wind-form of Ehécatl to bring winds carrying rain. Stela #3 shows depictions of hugely rotund, pregnant women. Stela #4 contains praises to the rain god, Tlaloc, to bring showers for the nourishment of the crops. Stela # 5 has a fresco of a water jaguar, a jaguar with an enlarged phallus representing fertility, upon it. Stela #6 contains a fresco of Tlaltecuhtli giving birth to Tezcatlipoca.

The second major discovery that will be found easily, especially if the trench-method of excavation is employed, is a short one foot high, stone wall that circumvents the site. Inside the wall, the site's floor is composed of stoneworking that leads to the central dais detailed next.

In the center of the floor's site is a circular dais approximately forty feet in diameter. This is a dais that



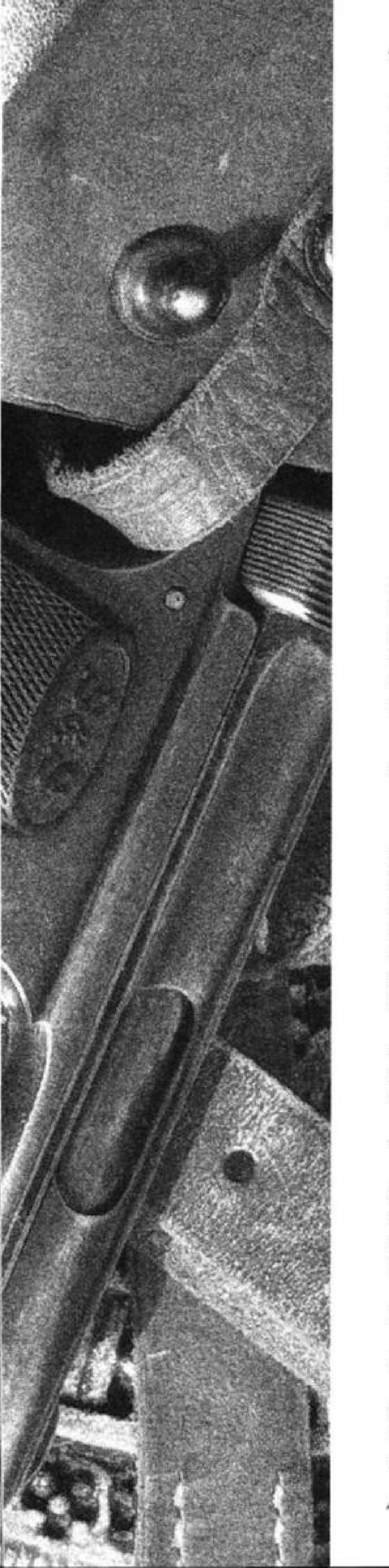
PLAYER CHARACTER

FATHER LYMON NOYSE
and **"BISHOP"**

Paleoastronomer, anthropologist, Mayanologist,
theologian and outdoorsman.

Died October 8th, 1923

"Don't worry. The dog will alert us to any danger..."



depicts the dismemberment of Coyolxauhqui, the moon goddess (see sidebar). The dais is ringed with astronomical depictions such as the moon and the stars. The stars in the ring are all composed of small pieces of obsidian. The edges of the ring is lined with silver. A successful Occult roll will draw a correlation between the moon and silver. It will also reveal the strange notion that silver was considered the excrement of the moon or the gods, not just another pretty mineral.

The fourth major find is a statue depicting Coatlicue, small about 12" high. Coatlicue's appearance is grotesque - she appears with two great snakes emerging from her head facing each other. She has snakes in place of her hands as well. A successful Anthropology roll will reveal that in Mesoamerican art these snakes denote gouts of blood gushing from her severed throat and wrists. She stands on two taloned feet and wears a dress of woven rattlesnakes. She also wears a grisly necklace of severed hearts and hands in front of her breasts.

The final discovery is a small, clay statuette approximately 6" in height. It is a birthing figure depicting the birth of Tezcatlipoca from Tlazolteotl. This is a fairly common statuette found in Mexico. In fact, Emilio has a similar statuette, and this is one of the pieces of evidence in his consideration of the belief that Nyarlathotep was born from the womb of Shub-Niggurath.

The Events

During the time previous to the excavation and during the time of the excavation itself, there are a number of events that will be occurring. Some of the events will be happening in the background and may only come to the surface through investigation. Others will directly effect the site or the area surrounding the site. At any time a successful Astronomy roll is made or if an almanac is consulted, the Investigators will clue into the fact that many of the events are occurring either on the Full Moon (the glowing lights emanating from the luminescent obsidian pyramids atop the stelae) or the New Moon (the various rites conducted to Shub-Niggurath).

The first major event happened on July 16. This is the date that the digging crew working for Emilio discover the first stela. One worker, Antonio Hernandez, reports the find to officials at the University of Mexico City and soon arrangements are made to begin an excavation at the site.

On July 27 (Full Moon) a glowing light is seen by the locals coming from the vicinity of the digsite. The origin of the light is undetermined.

By August 8 arrangements have been made for a joint dig between the University of Mexico City and the benefactors of the Investigators. As stated before, equal acknowledgements will be given to the members of both organizations working on the dig. All antiquities found are to remain in the hands of the Mexican officials, but the Investigator's benefactors have made special arrangements for a showing to be made.

On August 12 (New Moon), Conchita and her followers conduct various rites to Coatlicue this night, but nothing that is of any consequence occurs.

On August 26 (Full Moon), a glowing light is again seen at digsite. No one can still determine the origin of the luminescence.

Antonio Hernandez is slain on September 10 (New Moon) by a Dark Young of Shub-Niggurath while he is out doing his late evening chores. This Dark Young, summoned and bound by Conchita, was sent as retribution for bringing outsiders into the picture. His wife, Ana, reports his murder to the police the following day. His body is terribly mangled and ripped apart. Locals claim that he must have been attacked by a wild animal. Several claim to have seen signs of a jaguar sneaking around the village lately and they believe this to be the perpetrator. (Well, they're partially correct).

Investigators arrive in Mexico City on September 23 and meet Dr. Carlos Calderon who informs the Investigators about the details of the digsite. Miguel Benevides also discovers the figurine of the Rain Baby / Were-jaguar on this date.

On September 24 (Full Moon), a couple of events will occur. First, this night the glow from the digsite appears again. The dig workers see that the light is originating from the pyramidal top of the stela that is partially excavated. The glow lasts from 11:30 pm until 12:30 am. SAN loss for seeing the glow is 1/1D4. Later in the night, Miguel is slain by Emilio in his were-jaguar form for the crime of handling a sacred object.

The funeral of Miguel Benevides occurs on September 25. The Investigators are possibly introduced to Ana Hernandez, the widow of Antonio, and to Father Ignacio Perez.

On October 10 (New Moon), early in the night anyone awake will hear the persistent hooting of an owl with a successful Listen roll. Anyone succeeding in both an Idea roll and an Occult roll may remember that the owl is considered the harbinger of death. Around midnight, there will be an appearance of a Dark Young near the camp. It will only be spotted if someone awake and on guard makes one-fifth of a Spot Hidden roll. If spotted, all that will be seen is a large form moving off through the woods. There will be a SAN loss of 1/1D6 if seen. The next morning a strange hoofprint will be found nearby. The hoofprint is vaguely goat-like in appearance, but the hoofprint is over two feet in length. With a Spot Hidden, the Investigators will notice that the area around the hoofprint is a bizarre

Tezcatlipoca

"Tezcatlipoca had many faces. He was the surreptitious all-knower, the pansophist, with all the frightening power that this aptitude confers. He was the shaman, the deceiver, and the shape shifter. He was the berserk warrior and the Apollonian young man. He was the cajoler and the mocker. He was sudden wealth and the equally sudden fall into squalor and wretchedness. He was the forgiver and the forgetter - when it pleased him."

~ Bernardino de Sahagún

Tezcatlipoca, "Smoking Mirror," was a chief deity of the Aztec. He was known as a sorcerer extraordinaire. He was sometimes known as the bringer of grief or the destroyer. Other times, he was a creator. He is called "Smoking Mirror" due to the fact that he had his left foot bitten off by the earth monster, Tlaltecuhtli, and it was replaced with an obsidian mirror. Aside from the mirror replacing his foot, his depictions usually have alternating broad bands of gold and black across his face. He often appears as the black god of the north.

Blackness is only one of his aspects. Often, men were afflicted by the form of apparitions that appeared in the night, by corpses wrapped in shrouds, by eidolins and by goblins of all kinds. Tezcatlipoca was a master of necromancy.

Tezcatlipoca fought many battles with Quetzalcóatl, finally driving Quetzalcóatl from Tula through the use of a series of ruses. But besides battling Quetzalcóatl, he also assisted him with the creation of the world and its inhabitants.

Tezcatlipoca was also a great shape-shifter. His most common aspect was of Tepeyollotl, "Heart of the Mountain," which is the jaguar aspect. Tezcatlipoca also could take the form of Itztli, "Stone Knife," an aspect of Tezcatlipoca in the form of a sacrificial knife. Probably his most horrific form was that of Ixpuzteque, "Broken Face," a demon who appeared to lost travellers on the road, hopping horribly along on his single clawed foot. It is even said that Tezcatlipoca with his great magic could take upon the guises of his brother and sister deities such as Huitzilipocthli or Quetzalcóatl.

The Dismemberment of Coyolxauhqui and the Rebirth of Huitzilopochtli

By Aztec accounts, Coatlicue possessed many children among which were the Centzon Huitznahua, or 400 brothers, and Coyolxauhqui, a daughter. After the birth of all these children, Coatlicue swore a vow of chastity. Yet she was miraculously impregnated by a ball of down-feathers while sweeping at her home on Coatepec, or Serpent Mountain. This infuriated Coyolxauhqui and her brothers, and they swore to kill Coatlicue. But when they arrived at Coatepec, Huitzilopochtli, the War God, was born fully armored from Coatlicue and he set about dispatching his siblings. After slaying all, he completely dismembered the body of his sister, Coyolxauhqui, including the decapitation of her head which he then threw into the sky in order to form the moon. He paid respect to his fallen brothers by turning them into the stars in the sky. There is a dias depicting the dismemberment of Coyolxauqui which rests at the base of the temple dedicated to Huitzilopochtli in Mexico City at the Templo Mayor but it was not discovered until 1978.

mixture of both enhanced and decayed foliage.

By October 17, Emilio clues into the fact that Father Perez knows more than he should and is searching for more answers. Emilio, that night, will dig up the corpse of Miguel Benevides and perform the spell Create Zombie upon it. Father Perez will be killed by the zombie of Miguel, afterwhich Emilio will release control of it and it will fall inert. Father Perez's body will be found the next morning near the altar. Next to his body will be found scrawled in blood the following: *REV 17--*

If the Investigators read the Book of Revelations Chapter 17, they will tune into the following relevant verses with a successful Idea roll:

Revelations 17:4-5

4. *"And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication:*

5. *"And upon her forehead was a name written,* ***MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH."***

This is a clue alluding to the true nature of Conchita Moreno. The body of Miguel holding a machete will also be found sprawled on the floor near the altar. SAN loss for this entire site is 2/1D6+1 due to the murder of Father Ignacio and the fact that a supposed corpse is not in its grave and is HOLDING the murder weapon.

By October 24, the entire digsite will be uncovered. On this date the stelae will be fully affective in focusing the power of the moon to the Ritual of Summoning which will occur in the grotto on Emilio's estate during the Full Moon. Anyone at the digsite will see the glowing of the stelae at the regular time. They will also see a shimmering over the dias that rises to approximately ten feet. This is a moongate that can transport an individual to the grotto. Anyone that steps on the dias will be instantly teleported there. There is a SAN loss of 0/1 for this occurring plus the loss of a magic point.

Possible residual effects may occur on November 8 during the New Moon if there are any cultist survivors left in the area. If they are able, the survivor(s) will try to employ the most lethal means to get revenge upon the Investigators whether this be by the summoning of an entity or by direct force-of-arms.

If, at anytime before the excavation is completed, anyone quits the dig without the permission of the dig leader, Dr. Calderon, there will be extreme consequences. Among these consequences will be the evident anger of Dr. Calderon, a loss of 2D10 points of the Credit Rating skill, a possible firing of the Investigator from his job (if a Luck roll is failed), and the development of bad relations between the Investigator's benefactor and the Mexican government.

The Town of Texcoco

Texcoco is the town where Emilio Herrera lives and runs his business. Texcoco is a small town of around 4000 people that is about 15 miles east of Mexico City. The town is like many others; relying primarily on agriculture to support the local population. It has a central market and a Catholic church near the center of town.

At some point the Investigators might begin to wonder why Emilio wanted the warehouse built at the site. The main portion of the warehouse was to be built on a low lying mound. It has caused some suspicion among the locals, but not so much as to cause people to speak out. Emilio holds considerable political and economical influence in Texcoco and the locals seem to fear him. The truth is that Emilio wanted the ancient worship site dug up for his (and Conchita's) own reasons and fabricated the building of a warehouse story only after Antonio went to the officials at the University of Mexico City.

Church of La Morena

The Church of La Morena is built in the standard tradition of most Mexican

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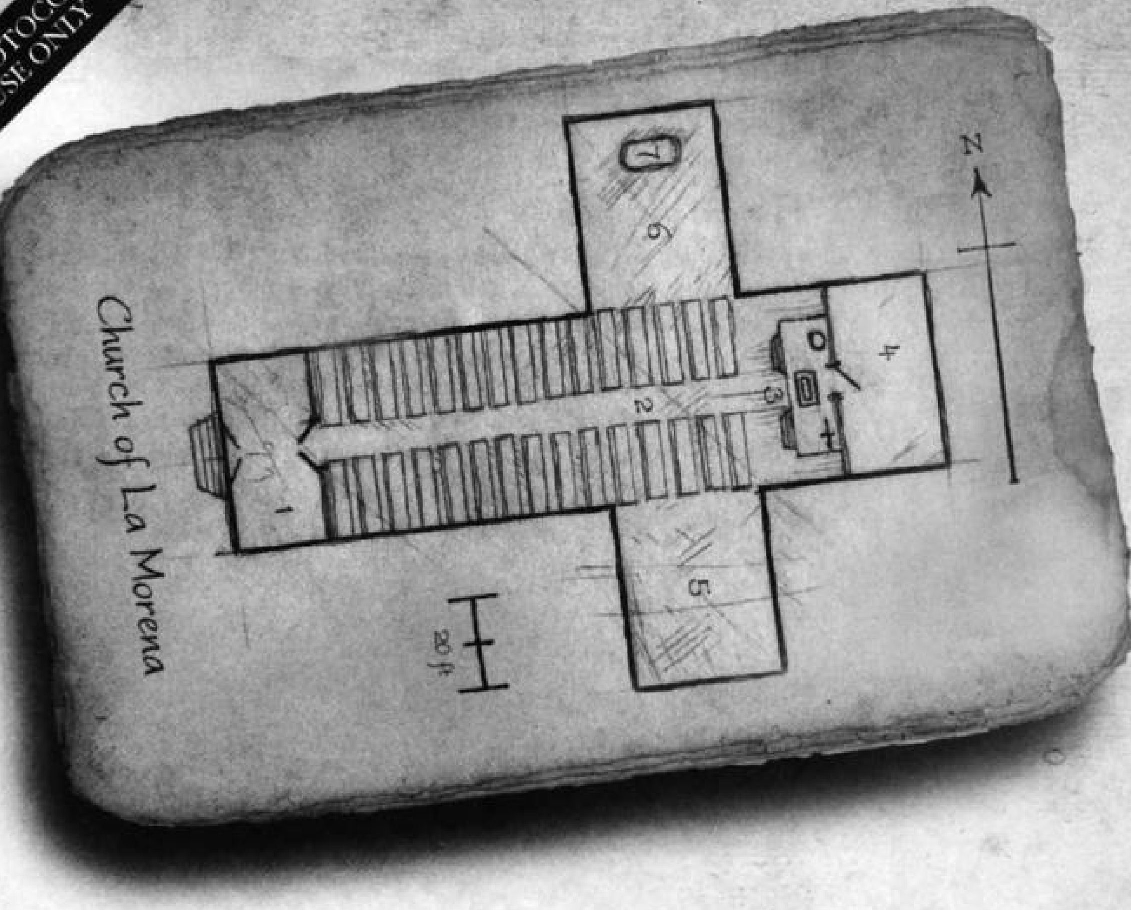


Catholic churches. It is made of stone and is built with a cruciform shape. This church serves the congregation of Father Perez which consists of the inhabitants of Texcoco and the local farmers.

1) Entryway: This is the entrance to the church. There are racks on both sides of the entryway with hooks for hanging outerwear or hats. There is a cord that runs down the south wall that leads up to the bell which is located right above the entryway. [Note: The only way to get up into the bell tower is to lean a ladder against the roof of the church and then climb to it.]

2) Naive: There are 15 pews on each side of the church to accommodate the congregation. There are two large stain-glassed windows on both exterior walls.

3) Altar area: This is the area where Father Perez performs his sermons. His pulpit is in the center. A statue of La Morena, the Dark Virgin, sits at the rear to the left and a statue of a dark-skinned Christ sits at the rear to the right. (It was a common practice amongst the natives to endear the Virgin Mary and Christ with the same skin tones as themselves.) Also to the rear behind the pulpit is a door that leads into Father Perez's room.

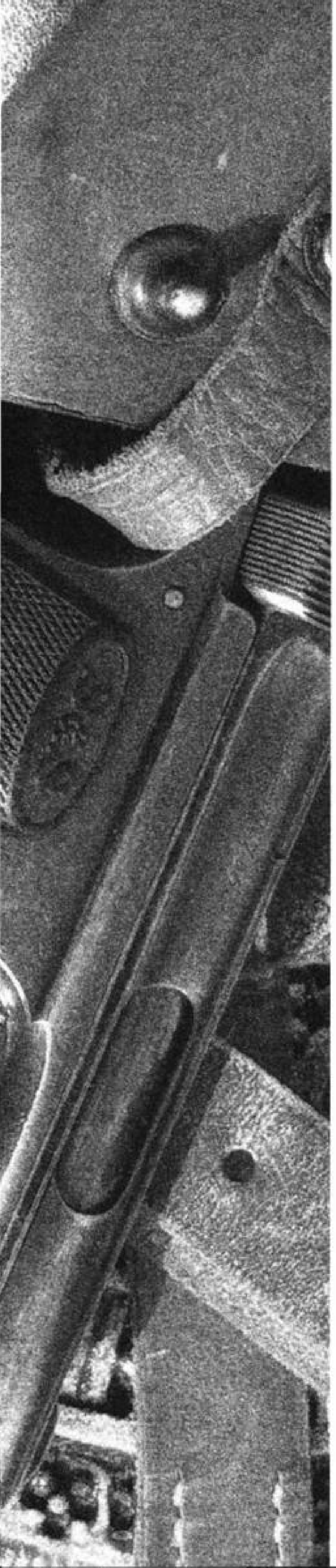
4) Habit: This is Father Perez's private room. It contains few items including a small writing table with kerosene lamp and chair, a single bed, and a small cabinet were he stores the sacramental wine and holy communion wafers.

5) Right Apex: This is a small section to the right in the church. Sometimes stands are placed here for a choir or extra seats may be added here as well.

6) Left Apex: This is a rather cleared out section of the church. In the very center of this section is a statue of a saint (see below).

7) Statue of St. Jerome: This is a statue of St. Jerome with a lion lying at his feet (see boxed text). The statue appears to be peering in a northwardly direction as if watching for or guarding against something. This is a subtle clue to Emilio's estate which lies to the north. (*Keeper's note: After the murder of Father Perez, the Keeper might want to have something happen to the statue. Some suggestions are for the statue to appear to be crying, to have the statue be desecrated, or perhaps for the statue to be completely broken.*)

If the Investigators come to Father Perez about superstitions or unnatural events, he can tell them several things. He believes that Antonio and Miguel did not die by ordinary circumstances, but were murdered by some supernatural entity. It is just a feeling he has and it will take some persuasion to get him to admit this. He knows the story of one of the horrible aspects of Tezcatlipoca - this is an avatar called Ixpuzteque (Broken Face). Ixpuzteque was a demon who appeared to lost travellers on the road, hopping horribly along on his single clawed foot. Father Perez also has access to an ancient manuscript that is kept within the church. It is entitled *Transformación* by Fray Umberto Fernandez. It deals with shamanic practices encountered by him when first arriving in the New World and his encounter with Aztecs and Spaniard who took up their beliefs. It also concerns a certain Felicio Herrera who fled



from Spain with his family and two other families, due to heretical charges against him for practicing witchcraft. The manuscript also contains a drawing of shamanic transformation and a depiction of the Smoking Mirror design.

Transformación
by Fray Umberto Fernandez

This book is a handwritten treatise written in Spanish detailing and comparing the various states of lycanthropy. It goes into great detail especially with concerns of the werewolf legends of Europe and the were-jaguar legends of the New World. Various comparisons are made including the effects of the full moon upon the individual and the invulnerabilities of the were-creatures. He states that whereas in Europe the werewolf is usually an individual who is inflicted with a curse or is a victim of the bite of another werewolf, the were-jaguar is usually a shaman who has voluntarily undergone a willing transformation. Among the Aztecs these shamans were dedicated to the pagan god Tepeyollotl, the jaguar aspect of Tezcatlipoca. There are what appears to be several firsthand accounts from Umberto including one directly dealing with a particular individual named Felicio Herrera, who had fled to the New World with his family and two other families due to heretical charges of practicing witchcraft. This is excerpted below:

St. Jerome

When the clergy came to the New World, Catholic priests brought images of St. Jerome to Chamula. St. Jerome was the priest credited with translating the Bible into Greek from Hebrew. There is a legend that he pulled a thorn from the paw of a lion that wandered into his monastery and the lion befriended him. Therefore, he is usually depicted having a lion lying at his feet. The locals seeing this image interpreted this feline as a jaguar and St. Jerome as the powerful protector of animal souls. He is known today by locals as St. Jerome, Our Father Jaguar.

"I had gone with the soldiers to break up the unholy pagan rites which I had known the Indians to be doing. The scene we happened upon was most sacrilegious indeed - dancers in the moonlight wearing the regalia of animal skins especially that of the jaguar. Some wore masks resembling the face of a jaguar - I swore their eyes were gleaming back at us. It was much to my surprise to encounter a familiar Spaniard among them, Felicio Herrera, whom my order had excommunicated from the church back in Spain. He was due to be brought before the Inquisition for charges of heresy dealing with the practice of the Black Arts but fled Spain before this preceding could take place. In all the world, how did he come to be here? Yet I was utterly horrified to witness him change from man to beast, a snarling and growling monstrosity. The soldiers opened fire and killed most of these pagans yet no body of a white man was found after the carnage...."

Also contained within are a sketch of a shaman transforming into a were-jaguar and a drawing of the Smoking Mirror design. *Transformacíon* takes approximately 10 hours to read. It conveys the reader with +1D2 Occult.

Going to the Police

At some time during the excavation, the Investigators might decide to go visit the police concerning the incidents that have occurred. The local police chief is Vasco

Payón. He is in his late 40s, and his still black hair is slightly balding. He also has three deputies - Chico, Eduardo, and Jaime. If the Investigators ask about the deaths, Vasco will inform them that he has personally headed the investigations of the deaths of both Antonio and Miguel. As long as the Investigators act cordial, he will tell them general details that he has gathered. Vasco believes that the deaths were caused by animals and that no foul play was involved. As long as the Investigators remain friendly, the police may be a potentially potent ally. But if they are disruptive or Emilio persuades / bribes the police department, they might be a thorn in the Investigators side.

An Apple a Day

If the Investigators desire to learn about the deaths from a physician, they can contact Dr. Roberto Grijalva, the doctor in charge of evaluating the deaths. Dr. Grijalva, 26, is a recent graduate of the University of Mexico City and is a new doctor to the town. He is originally from Honduras and is still unfamiliar with the local surroundings. Roberto has had few experiences with violent deaths such as the two that have occurred. He is therefore a little unsure of the situation that has happened, and he has quickly dismissed the deaths as natural occurrences resulting from animal attacks.

The Cottage

Conchita's cottage lies several miles south of town. Her cottage is not much more than a hastily-constructed four room shack made of loose-fitting lumber. Conchita will come here several times during the time of the dig. Besides Conchita, a man lives here. He is Rafael Sanchez. He will be introduced as Conchita's caretaker for the times when she is off at the University. He is actually her apprentice.

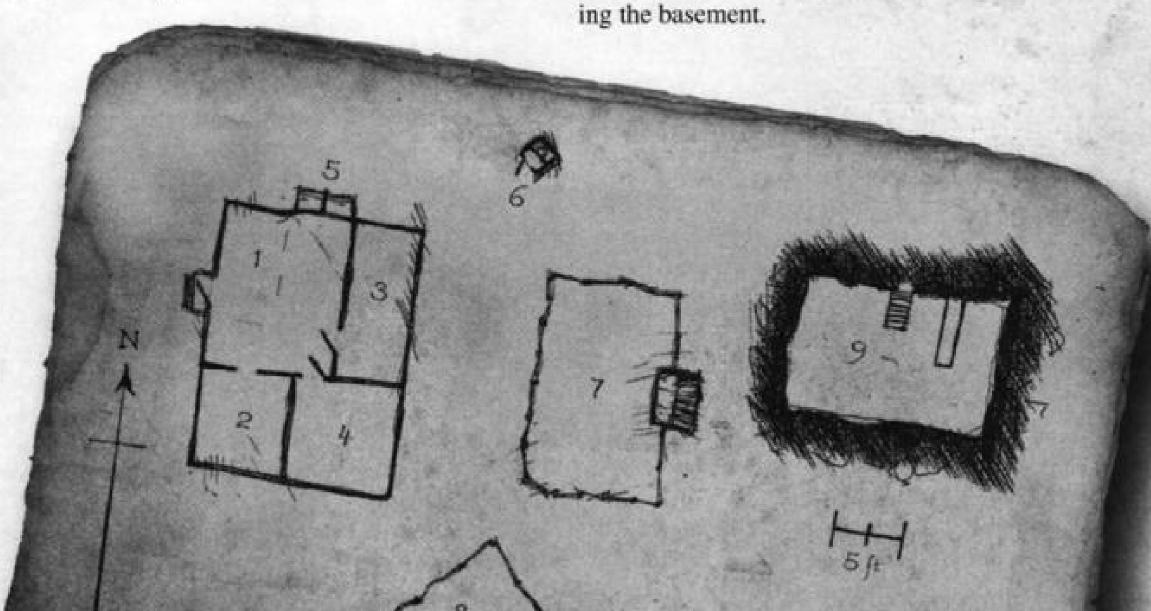
1) Common Room: This is a sparsely furnished room containing a couple of chairs and a rough-shod bench.

2) Kitchen: The kitchen is almost barren with few food stores in the cabinets. There is a small stone hearth here. There is also a small, round table and two rickety, wooden chairs in here.

3) Rafael's Bedroom: Rafael's bedroom contains a single bed, a nightstand, and an oil lamp. There is a small armoire in one corner of the room. Rafael keeps a fully-loaded .38 Smith & Wesson revolver and a box of ammunition in the nightstand by his bed.

4) Conchita's Bedroom: Conchita's bedroom has relatively few possessions but more than Rafael. Her room also contains a single bed, a nightstand, and an oil lamp. She also has a small, hand-built bookcase that contains several academic texts pertaining to anthropology, archaeology, history, and astronomy. She also has an armoire for her clothes in a corner. In a false bottom of the armoire, there is a secret storage space were Conchita keeps an obsidian, sacrificial dagger which is enchanted. This blade can store up to 20 MP itself. It can also transfer MP to the menhirs.

5) Cellar Doors: The doors to the cellar have a rusty chain and lock on them to prevent unwanted visitors from entering the basement.



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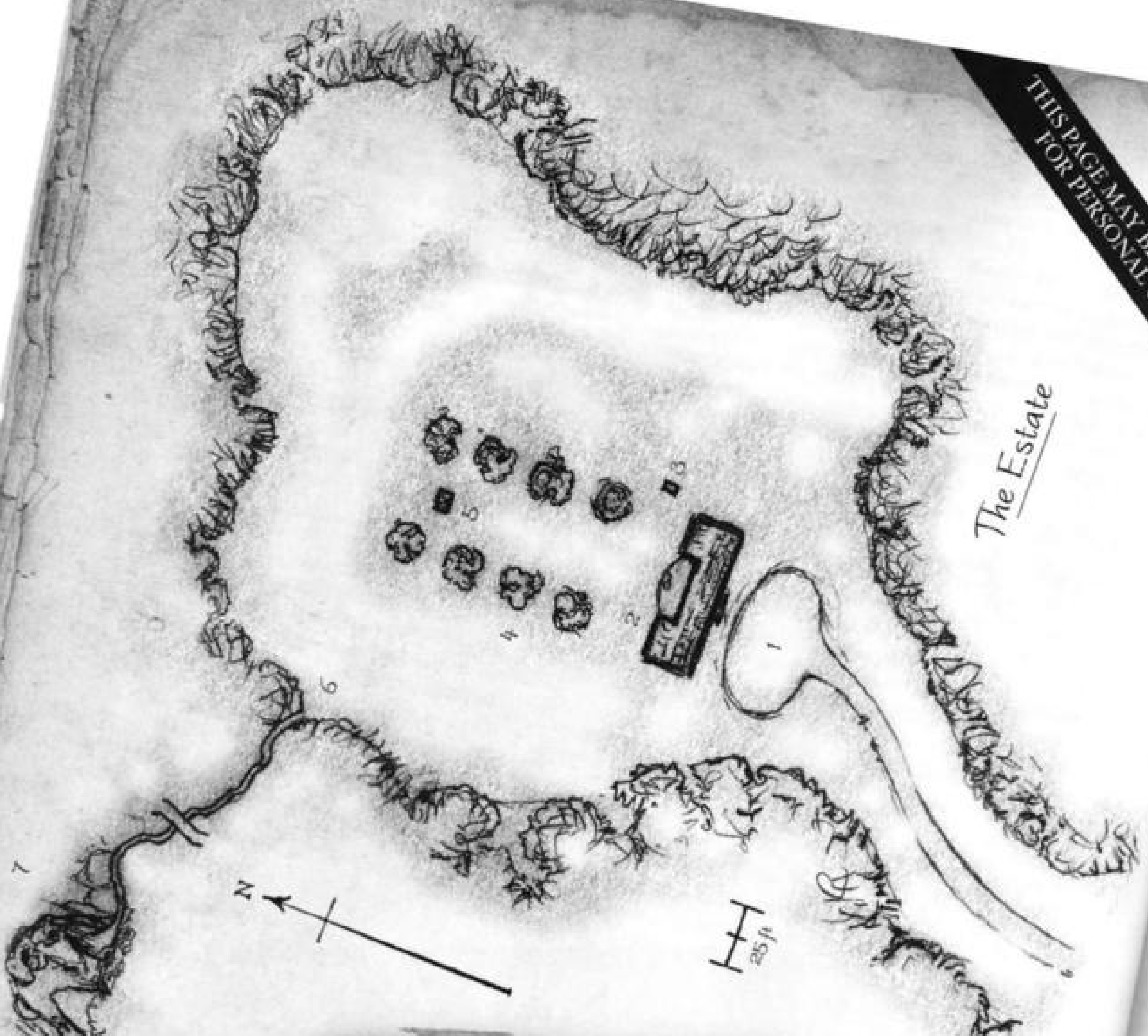
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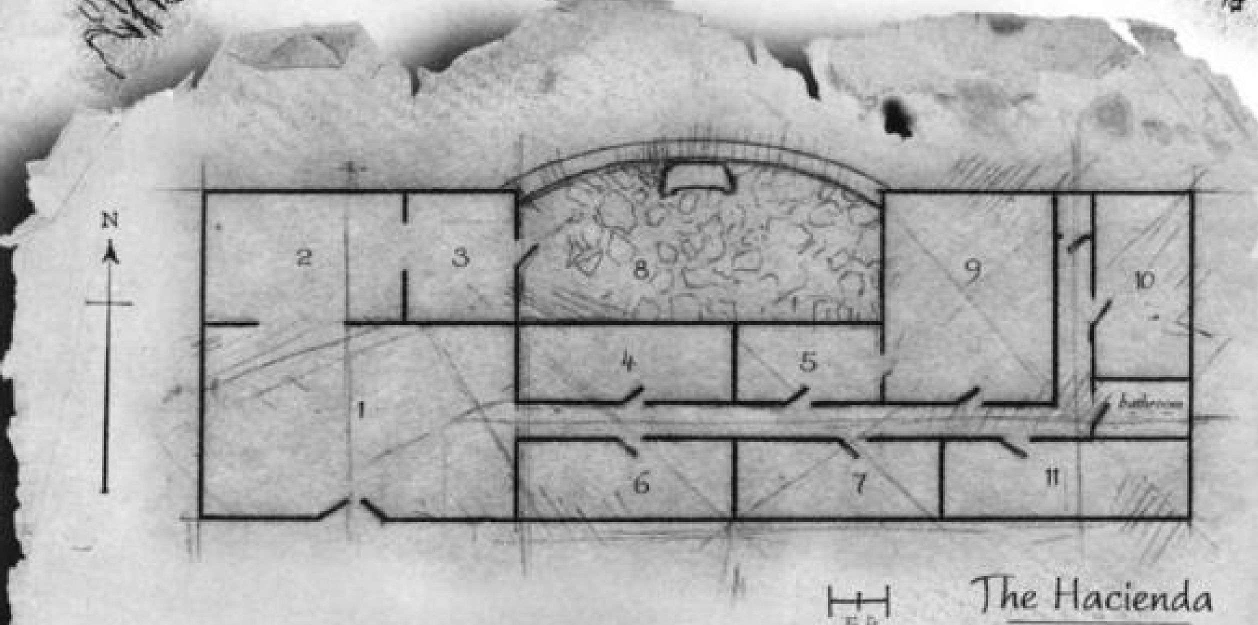
The Estate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The Hacienda

6) Outhouse: There is nothing unusual about this literal hole in the ground.

7) Goat pen: Conchita has a pen of black goats numbering at anytime 10+1D6 goats. These goats are kept to make people believe that she and Rafael are simple farmers. The goats are, in actuality, used as sacrifices in Conchita's rituals.

8) Chicken coop: The couple of dozen chickens housed in the chicken pen are part of the farming front. Sometimes a few of the chickens are used as sacrifices.

9) Cellar: For the most part, the cellar is absolutely normal having wooden stairs leading down to a hard-packed dirt floor. There are some storage boxes, some cabinets along the walls, several milk containers, a churn, miscellaneous gardening and farming implements, and several baskets of eggs. There is one long cabinet that juts out from the northern wall east of the stairs. In the far northeast corner drawn on the wall is a picture of the milk-yielding tree, chichiual quauitl. Conchita believes the milk-yielding tree to actually be a stylized vision of ancient Aztecs paying reverence to one of the Dark Young of Shub-Niggurath. A successful Cthulhu Mythos roll might reveal this (although whether it is truly a Dark Young or not is purely speculative).

The Estate

Emilio Herrera owns an ample amount of land north of town. He lives here along with his man servant, Pánfilo Nuñez. Most of Emilio's estate is used to grow a strain of hennequin, or maguey which produces white juice to be fermented into mildly intoxicating liquor called pulque. The immediate area around his hacienda is heavily wooded except for the clearing around his home and his garden area. The following are entries detailing the specific areas of the estate.

1) Entry Road: This is a dirt road that leads from the edge of town up to a circular drive in front of the estate.

2) Hacienda: The hacienda is described in full detail below.

3) Outhouse: This is an ordinary spot for waste disposal.

4) Estate Grounds: The grounds are well-kept and neatly trimmed. Yet if examined closely, one will notice that the garden is in various states of blight and flourishing - some plants will be bright and blooming out of season whereas other places will be blotched and decayed. In the center of the garden is a statue.

5) Statue: In the middle of the garden is a statue of an Aztec shaman. The shaman, whose skin is entirely black and has a gold face with a black stripe on each cheek, is walking along with a jaguar who is licking his palm. A successful Anthropology or Occult roll will lead the Investigator to correlate the image of the statue with a description of Tezcatlipoca. A successful Cthulhu Mythos roll will allude Investigators to the image of Nyarlathotep walking with the beasts licking his hands.

6) Pathway: This is a pathway that leads from the edge of the grounds about a quarter of a mile back into the forest and ends at what appears to be a sloping hill facing (see #7 below).

7) Cave Entrance: On the side of the hill is a vine covered cave entrance that can be easily found with any reasonable inspection. If the vines are removed, one can see the carved image of a jaguar's face with the cave representing the mouth. A successful Anthropology roll or Occult roll will remind the Investigator that a jaguar's mouth is a representation of the entrance to the underworld.

The Hacienda

Emilio's hacienda is a sprawling, luxurious home that is built in a classic Spanish style. It is very spacious and roomy, being able to house many more people than just the two that actually live there. The hacienda can easily have many windows opened that will provide a breeze circulating through the house to cool it even in the blazingly hot summers. It is not electrified.

1) Living Room: The living room is the main room for entertaining guests - it having many chairs and sofas. There is a fully stocked liquor bar with a large humidor filled with expensive cigars in one corner. There is also a vitrola for playing phonographs in another corner.

2) Dining Room: The dining room is elegantly decorated with a long, oak dining table with settings for up to ten people. There is large chandelier that hangs above the table for lighting during late evening dinners.

3) Kitchen: The kitchen is a cook's dream. There are many cabinets for storage, a huge pantry for food stores, and a large wood stove for cooking.

4) Guest Bedroom: This bedroom holds a queen-size bed for guests when staying overnight. It also has a large armoire, a chest of drawers, and a dresser with full-size mirror.

5) Study: This is where Emilio performs the bulk of his business dealings and where he stores all of his business papers. He has an ornate, oak roll-top desk along one wall in here. There are many accounting records, business documents, contracts, etc. stored in here. If the Investigators are able to search two man-hours in here and make a Spot Hidden roll, they will find documents concerning the digsite where Emilio originally planned to build a warehouse. A successful Accounting roll made after spending an hour perusing these files will lead the Investigator to believe that there was to be an excavation at the site but nothing pertaining to building a warehouse can be uncovered.

6) Guest Bedroom: This room is basically the same as #4 above.

7) Guest Bedroom: This room is basically the same as #4 above.

8) Patio: There are several chairs and a small table out here for taking meals out-of-doors. There is also a small, clay chimney stove at the edge of the patio for outdoor

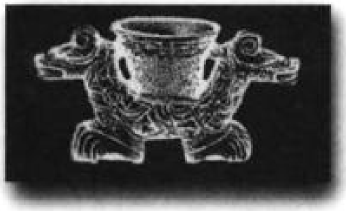
cooking.

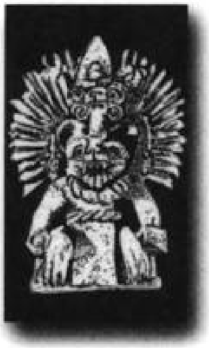
9) Emilio's Bedroom: Emilio's bedroom is lavishly decorated. He has a king-size, canopied bed. He also has an oak armoire and a chest of drawers. Emilio keeps his Colt .45 semi-automatic, a spare loaded magazine, and a box of ammunition in the drawer of his nightstand which is right beside his bed.

10) Pánfilo's Bedroom: Pánfilo's bedroom is a simple room. It contains a single, twin bed, a chest of drawers, and a desk with a oil lamp. The desk contains a box of 12-gauge shotgun shells in a drawer. Pánfilo usually keeps a double-barrel 12-gauge shotgun propped in the corner of the room. He also keeps a sheathed fighting knife in the bottom drawer of the chest of drawers.

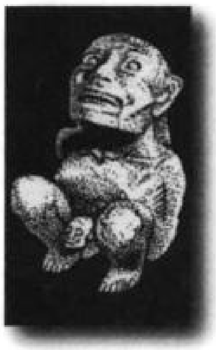
11) The Collection's Room: Emilio's Collection Room resembles a miniature museum due to the number of artifacts that adorn the room as well as having a large library collection. All of the artifacts are Mesoamerican in design and most are Aztec although some Maya and Olmec artifacts exist as well. The following is a list of examples, feel free to add or to subtract. See side drawings for depictions of the artifacts.

1) Jaguar Censer - This is a clay, potlike censer that has stylized jaguar heads for handles on each side. Emilio burns incenses necessary for his shamanic rituals in this censer. A close examination of the censer will discover a few remnants of burnt incense.

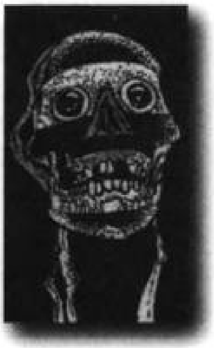




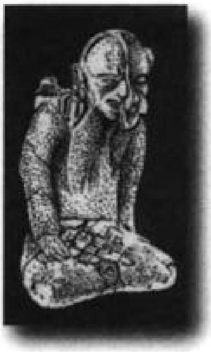
2) Tiger God Figurine - This is an anthropomorphic, feline figure with large pronounced canines and a huge headdress.



3) Birthing Figure - This is a small, clay statuette approximately 6" in height depicting the birth of Tezcatlipoca from Tlazolteotl. It is similar to the one found at the digsite.



4) Adorned Skull - This skull is adorned with an outer layer of jet and turquoise. With a successful Anthropology roll, the Investigator realizes that the skull depicts one of the aspects of Tezcatlipoca.



5) Statue of Were-jaguar - This is a small, obsidian statue approximately 9" in height which depicts an anthropomorphic form with feline features.

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6) Shamanic Mask of Jaguar - This is a traditional Mesoamerican shamanic mask formed into the shape of a jaguar's face. The striking feature of the mask is the realistic cat-like eyes on the mask which even reflects light as a cat's eye would. The jaguar mask will convey the wearer the ability to see invisible spirits or entities, such as a Star Vampire, and expose the wearer to any Sanity loss that may be involved.

7) Smoking Mirror - Having a surface of polished obsidian, this is a magical object out of whose ebony depths the god, Tezcatlipoca, could summon and command all things. Oracles were read in it, and those who peered into it could be traumatized at the horrors seen within it. Any person grasping the Smoking Mirror should make a POW x 1 roll. If the roll is failed, nothing happens. If the roll is successful, the holder beholds a horrifying vision (determined by the Keeper) for a SAN loss of 1/1D10. If a 01 or 02 is rolled, the sight is even more terrifying as the vision reveals the likeness of a Great Old One resulting in a SAN loss as per the god seen. Most appropriately would be a form or aspect of Nyarlathotep or Shub-Niggurath, but the Keeper should feel free to embellish.

Notes on the Jaguar

The jaguar, el tigre in Spanish, ocelotl in Nahuatl, was one of the most revered creatures in Mesoamerican cultures. The Olmecs even took their name from Tenocelome, "people of the jaguar." The jaguar was a symbol of many things in the different cultures. Foremost, the jaguar represented rain and fertility. They were also often portrayed as signs of success in hunting, warfare, and were considered supernatural protection against spirit attack.

The myths concerning the jaguar were numerous as well. In Olmec legend, the mouth of the jaguar represents the cave entrance to the underworld. Cat eyes were linked to mirrors and reflections enabling shamans to perceive invisible spirits. It was claimed that the best shamans were nahualli, form-changers who could undergo a transformation taking the form of an animal such as the jaguar. This transformation would turn them into the creature known as the were-jaguar, half-man and half-beast. According to Sahagún, Aztec "conjurers went about carrying its hide - the hide of its forehead and of its chest, and its tail, its nose, and its claws, and its head, and its fangs, and its snout. It is said that they went about their tasks with them - that with them they did daring deeds, that because of them they were feared." The transformation was rumored to give shamans the ability to cross boundaries - to travel in magical flight through the air, across the land, and over the water. The Aztec god, Tezcatlipoca, was even believed to be able to transform himself into a jaguar. There is another myth that a huge jaguar monster copulated with a supine human female to create a race of part-human, part-jaguar - the were-jaguar. It is known that shamans often wore bracelets and necklaces of jaguar fangs as fetishes.

The Cave

The cave is extremely damp, dark, and dreary. The cave tunnel is approximately five feet wide and seven feet in height. Several feet within the entrance are two large murals on the cave walls. The mural on the left is an image of Tezcatlipoca, in his normal appearance. The mural on the right is a fresco of Tepeyollotli, the jaguar form of Tezcatlipoca. The frescoes appear to be very ancient.

The cave continues approximately 50 feet until there is an alcove on each side. Within each of these alcoves is a zombie regaled in a classic Mesoamerican warrior garment and armed with a macuahuitl. Emilio has animated this pair to serve as guardians of the grotto.

Past these alcoves, the cave winds several hundred more feet until it opens up into the grotto.

The Grotto

If Investigators were caught in the moongate at the digsite, they have obviously been transported to an underground grotto via the moongate and are now standing upon a circular dais (#1) which lies in the center of a deep pool of water (#2) that is black to the appearance. It should be obvious that they are in immediate trouble as they are surrounded by all the ritual participants. Otherwise they have arrived through the tunnel that enters into the east wall. The site of the grotto is an enclosed subterranean cavern approximately 80' long by 50' wide with a ceiling height of about 40'. A pool is located within the exact center of the cavern and is full of dark, murky water full of blood, excrement, and other forms of filth. Surrounding the pool are six menhirs (#3) with a height of approximately

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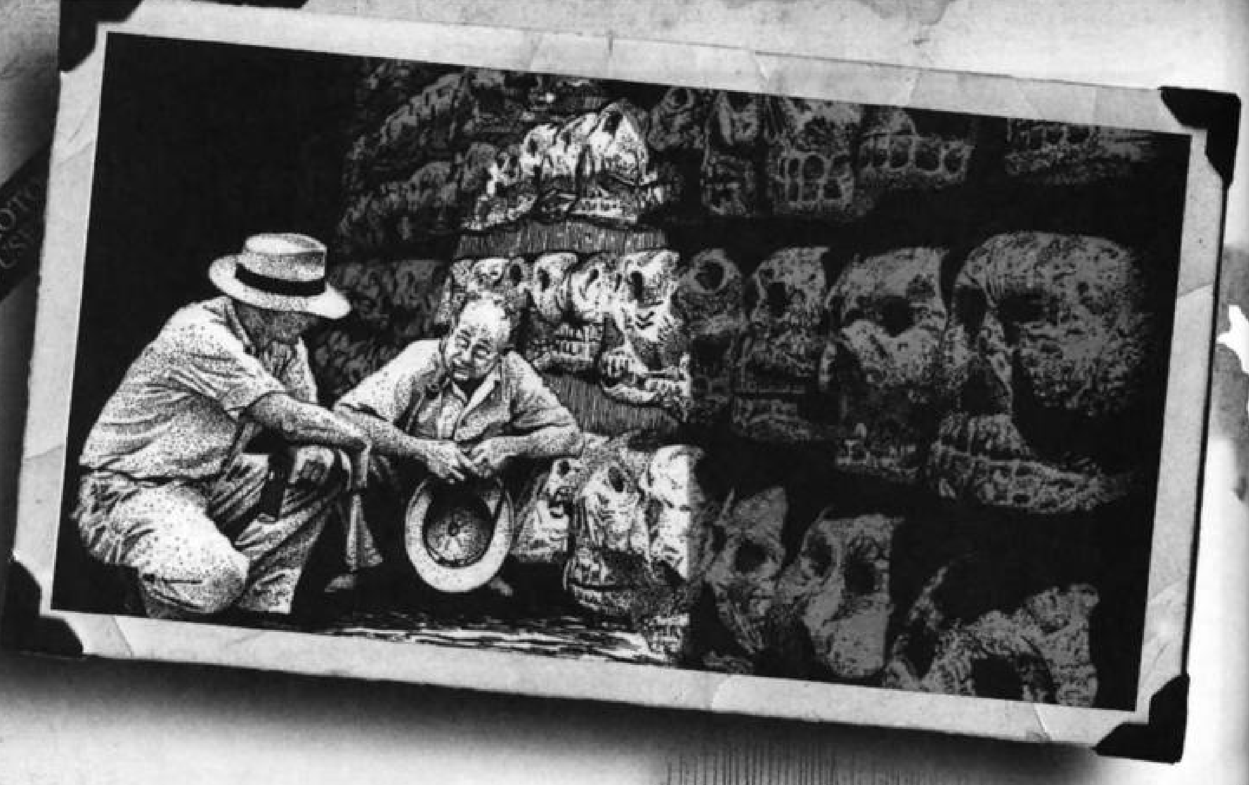

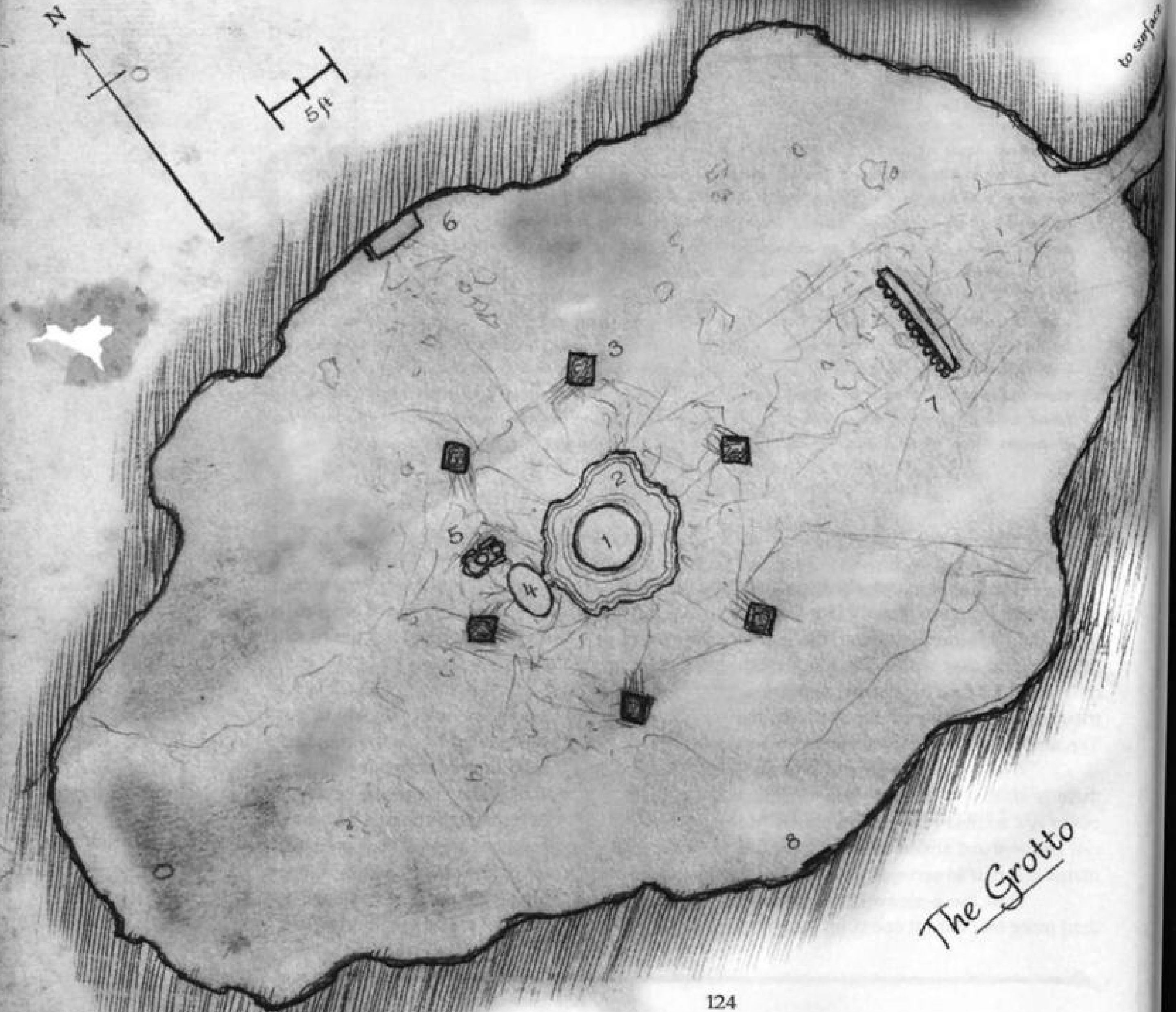
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The Grotto

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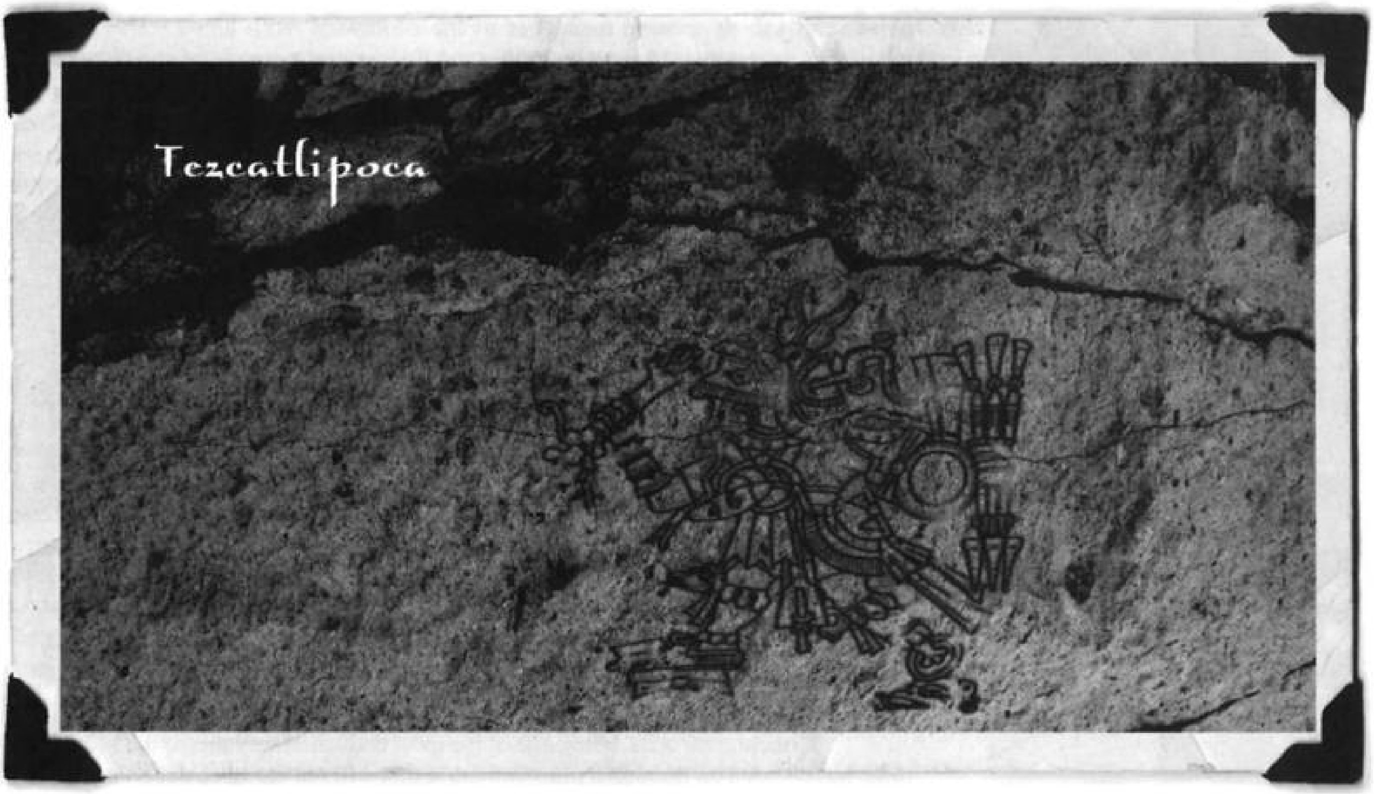

20 feet. There are various lit torches held in sconces around the wall to provide luminescence within the cavern. There is a large, convex sacrificial stone altar (#4) lying near the pool with blood troughs that empty into the pool itself. Next to the altar is a large cuauhxicalli, or container for hearts, formed into the shape of a jaguar (#5). Against the northern wall there is a large 30 foot tall statue of the goddess Coatlicue (#6) as shown on page 31. On the eastern side of the grotto is a small, makeshift tzompantli, or skull rack (#7), with about two dozen skulls hung upon it, some are obviously recent acquisitions to the rack for they still have bits of flesh upon them and drip a trail of blood (SAN 1/1D4). On the southern wall is a group of etchings engraved into the wall. This is a special gate (#8) that can only be

Tepeyollotli

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passed through by coating the stones of the "doorway" with blood. The location to where this gate may lead is an option for the Keeper, but a couple of suggestions are to a Mi-Go base on the moon ala Chaosium's *Fungi from Yuggoth / Day of the Beast* campaign, to the Temple of the Goat from Chaosium's "Temple of the Moon," or to another suitable location amongst the scenarios within *The Mysteries of Mesoamerica.*

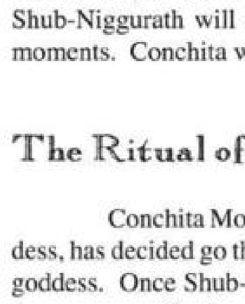
The Scene

If the Investigators arrive at the grotto near the midnight hour, they might behold a ghastly scene. Unless the Investigators have intervened, Emilio, Conchita, Rafael, Pánfilo, and Conchita's fellow cult members will be here in the grotto around the now shimmering pool, surrounded by glowing menhirs resembling the ones at the digsite. They will all be chanting in a summons to Shub-Niggurath and Conchita will slay one of her black goats (or any unfortunate captives) on the altar. SAN loss is 1/1D2 if the goat is involved, 1/1D6 if there are people involved. If the Investigators do not interfere, Shub-Niggurath will manifest above the pool in all her magnificence in a matter of moments. Conchita will then undergo the Ritual of Rebirth.

The Ritual of Rebirth

Conchita Morena, being one of the most dedicated servants of the Mother Goddess, has decided go through a transformation that will put her in closer contact with her goddess. Once Shub-Niggurath materializes, Conchita will be engulfed within one of the many manifesting sexual orifices of Shub-Niggurath. She will then undergo a mutating process which will vastly change her body. The rebirth from the vagina of Shub-Niggurath completes the process turning her into one of the "Blessed of Shub-Niggurath, or Gof'nn hupadgh Shub-Niggurath." Her transformation will give her the appearance of a female satyr. The rebirth will endow her with "immortality," to the extent that she will never grow old or die due to aging.

NPCs



Carlos Calderon, archaeologist and expedition member, 39
Nationality: Mexican (Mayan)

STR 13	**CON** 15	**SIZ** 13	**INT** 15	**POW** 14
DEX 12	**APP** 11	**EDU** 19	**SAN** 0	**HP** 14

Damage Modifier: +1D4

Skills: Anthropology 45%, Archaeology 52%, Boating 25%, Botany 22%, Cartography 30%, Climb 60%, Cthulhu Mythos 22%, Drive Automobile 25%, Geology 35%, History 49%, Mayan History 77%, Jump 40%, Library Use 59%, Listen 47%, Land Navigation 50%, Occult 45%, Aztec Occult 41%, Mayan Occult 88%, Persuade 32%, Ride 39%, Spot Hidden 60%, Swim 55%, Zoology 6%

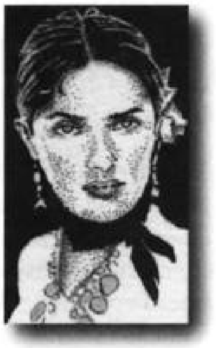
Languages: English 77%, German 41%, Latin 75%, Ancient Mayan 70%, Nahuatl 62%, Portuguese 90%, Spanish 98%, Yucatec 77%

Attacks: Handgun 28%, 1D10 damage (.38 S&W revolver)
Small Club 30%, 1D6+dm damage (hatchet or small club)

Spells: Call/Dismiss Yig, Clutch of Nyogtha, Flesh Ward, Hands of Colubra, Shrivelling, Summon/Bind Child of Yig, Worms, Wrack

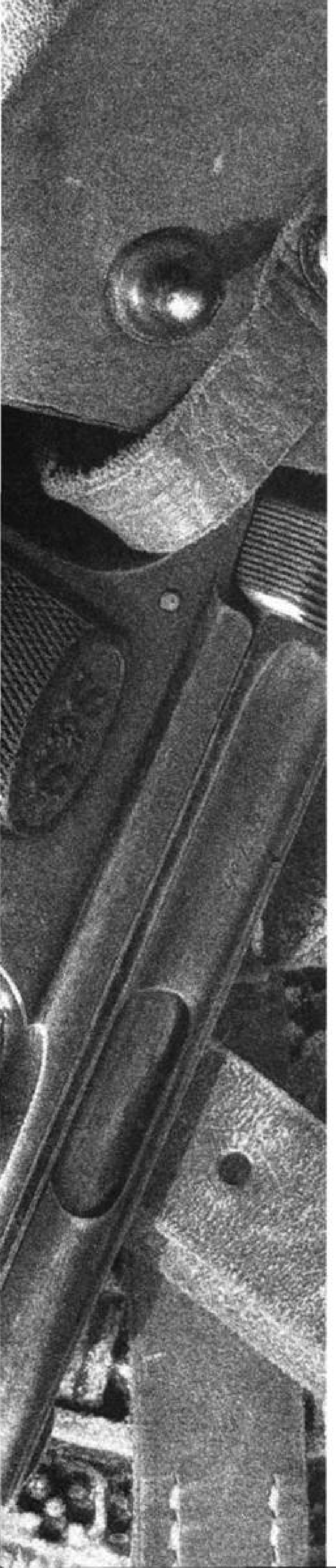
Notes: Dr. Calderon is a qualified field archaeologist who has worked at sites throughout Mexico and the southwest United States. He has a Ph.D. in Archaeology from the University of Pennsylvania and an M.A. in Linguistics from the University of Mexico

City. Dr. Calderon will act as the official Mexican liasion between the University of Mexico City and the archaeological team. Dr. Calderon has a dark side to him that will creep up in "The Heretics" when he is met again, but for now he should act in a polite and sane manner. Calderon will NOT do anything to endanger or reveal himself within this scenario, but he will acquire any artifacts if possible.



Conchita Moreno, Assistant to Dr. Calderon and High Priestess of Coatlicue, 24 *[human stats]*
Nationality: Mexican
STR 11 **CON** 14 **SIZ** 11 **INT** 14 **POW** 17
DEX 13 **APP** 15 **EDU** 13 **SAN** 0 **HP** 13
Damage Modifier: +0
Skills: Anthropology 23%, Archaeology 44%, Astronomy 41%, Climb 47%, Cthulhu Mythos 29%, Drive Automobile 25%, First Aid 35%, Geology 18%, History 41%, Jump 30%, Library Use 49%, Listen 42%, Land Navigation 20%, Occult 35%, Aztec Occult 51%, Persuade 32%, Ride 49%, Spot Hidden 62%, Swim 58%
Languages: Nahuatl 78%, Spanish 66%, English 61%, Yucatec 55%
Attacks: Knife 54%, 1D4+2+dm damage (sacrificial dagger)
Handgun 31%, 1D6 damage (.22 Colt Woodsman, 3 shots/round, 10 round capacity)
Spells: Call/Dismiss Coatlicue (Shub-Niggurath), Clutch of Nyogtha, Create Gate, Deflect Harm, Dread Curse of Azathoth, Enchant Sacrificial Dagger, Enthrall Victim, Find Gate, Hands of Colubra, Powder of Ibn-Ghazi, Summon/Bind Dark Young, Voorish Sign
Items: Conchita possesses a special obsidian, sacrificial dagger which is enchanted. This blade can store up to 20 MP itself. It can also transfer MP to the menhirs which can hold up to 10 MP each.
Notes: Conchita is the beautiful and deadly assistant to Dr. Calderon. Conchita has no knowledge of Dr. Calderon's dark secret. She is the high priestess to Coatlicue (Shub-Niggurath) in the area and only has a small following. She will plan to undergo the rebirthing ritual during the summoning ceremony in the grotto. During her spare time, she has acquired her B.A. in Archaeology with a minor in Astronomy from the University of Mexico City and is currently working on her Masters in Archaeology. She usually wears a purple and scarlet handkerchief around her neck when working.

Conchita Moreno, Gof'nn hupadgh Shub-Niggurath *[stats after Ritual of Rebirth]*
Nationality: Mexican
STR 11 **CON** 20 **SIZ** 14 **INT** 14 **POW** 23 **DEX** 13 **Move** 8 **Hit Points** 17
Damage Modifier: +1D4



Attacks: Knife 54%, 1D4+2+dm damage (sacrificial dagger)
Handgun 31%, 1D6 damage (.22 Colt Woodsman)
Claw 30%, 1D6+dm damage
Bite 30%, 1D4 damage

Armor: None, but the Blessed regenerate 1D6 hit points each round until dead.

Spells: Call/Dismiss Coatlicue (Shub-Niggurath), Clutch of Nyogtha, Create Gate, Deflect Harm, Dread Curse of Azathoth, Enchant Sacrificial Dagger, Enthrall Victim, Find Gate, Hands of Colubra, Powder of Ibn-Ghazi, Summon/Bind Dark Young, Voorish Sign

Sanity Loss: It costs 0/1D4 Sanity points to see Conchita in the form of one of the Blessed of Shub-Niggurath.

Notes: These are the statistics for Conchita after she undergoes the Ritual of Rebirth and becomes a Gof'nn hupadgh Shub-Niggurath. She still possesses her flowing dark hair and beautiful face, but now she has sprouted small goat-like horns on the top of her head and has developed cloven feet. She actually resembles a female version of how a satyr is normally pictured. She could possibly still pass for human with a head covering, specially made footwear, and a long dress.

Emilio Herrera, Shaman of Tezcatlipoca and Were-jaguar, 35
[Stats in parentheses are for the were-form]

Nationality: Mexican
STR 15 (24) **CON** 16 (19) **SIZ** 15(17) **INT** 12 (6)
POW 17 (17) **DEX** 11 (15) **APP** 11 (NA) **EDU** 12 (NA)
SAN 0 **HP** 14 (18)

Damage Modifier: +1D4 (+2D6)

Skills: Accounting 52%, Bargain 56%, Climb 43%, Credit Rating 33%, Cthulhu Mythos 33%, Dodge 40%, Drive Automobile 29%, Fast Talk 42%, Hide 58%, Jump 31%, Law 25%, Listen 71%, Occult 56%, Persuade 53%, Ride 52%, Sneak 46%, Spot Hidden 43% (in were-form: Climb 58%, Hide 78%, Jump 51%, Listen 71%, Sneak 66%, Spot Hidden 73%, Track By Smell 69%)

Languages: Spanish 75%, Nahuatl 62%, English 48%

Attacks: Handgun 45%, 1D10+2 damage (.45 automatic; in human form)
Bite 35%, 1D8 damage (in were-form)
Claw 50%, 1D6+dm damage (in were-form)

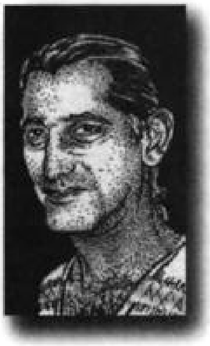
Armor: In jaguar or man-beast form, Emilio has 1 point of hide armor plus regeneration of 1 hit point per round until dead.

Spells: Contact Tezcatlipoca (Nyarlathotep), Create Zombie, Flesh Ward, Send Dreams (see below), Summon/Bind Hunting Horror

Sanity Loss: It costs 0/1D8 Sanity points to see Emilio in were-jaguar form.

Items: Emilio has a special object called a Smoking Mirror. It is a small, rounded mirror made of completely polished obsidian. The Smoking Mirror conveys the power of limited prophecy to Emilio through allowing him to view various images and reading the oracles contain within these visions. Any person grasping the Smoking Mirror should make a POW x 1 roll. If the roll is failed, nothing happens. If the roll is successful, the holder beholds a horrifying vision (determined by the Keeper) for a SAN loss of 1/1D10. If a 01 or 02 is rolled, the sight is even more terrifying as the vision reveals the likeness of a Great Old One resulting in a SAN loss as per the god seen. Most appropriately would be a form or aspect of Nyarlathotep or Shub-Niggurath, but the Keeper should feel free to embellish.

Notes: Emilio is a rich, community leader. He owns a hacienda on which a variety of hennequin is grown for the production of pulque. Yet, Emilio has a dark secret that is known to only a select few. Emilio is a follower of Tezcatlipoca and has gained certain powers from his worship including the abilities of a were-jaguar. He can normally control this ability except at times of the full moon. Emilio will act like he is displeased at the excavation of the digsite which was going to be where one of his warehouses was to be located, but is in fact pleased that this (un)holy site is being uncovered at little expense to himself.



Pánfilo Nuñez, Majordomo, 42

Nationality: Mexican

STR 14 **CON** 13 **SIZ** 11 **INT** 11 **POW** 10
DEX 11 **APP** 12 **EDU** 12 **SAN** 0 **HP** 12

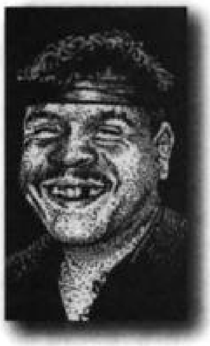
Damage Modifier: +1D4

Skills: Bargain 62%, Buttle 70%, Cthulhu Mythos 7%, Dodge 33%, Drive Automobile 49%, First Aid 39%, Gourmet Cook 65%, Listen 64%, Occult 28%, Sneak 52%, Spot Hidden 66%

Languages: Spanish 61%, Nahuatl 68%

Attacks: Shotgun 35%, 4D6/2D6/1D6 damage (12 gauge double-barrel shotgun)
Knife 30%, 1D4+2+dm damage (fighting knife)

Notes: Pánfilo is dedicated and very loyal to Emilio. He knows Emilio's secret and would die to protect it and Emilio himself. Pánfilo follows Emilio's beliefs and is content in the serving role that he plays.



Rafael Sanchez, Lesser Priest of Coatlicue, 22

Nationality: Mexican

STR 13 **CON** 12 **SIZ** 12 **INT** 11 **POW** 13
DEX 11 **APP** 10 **EDU** 10 **SAN** 0 **HP** 12

Damage Modifier: +1D4

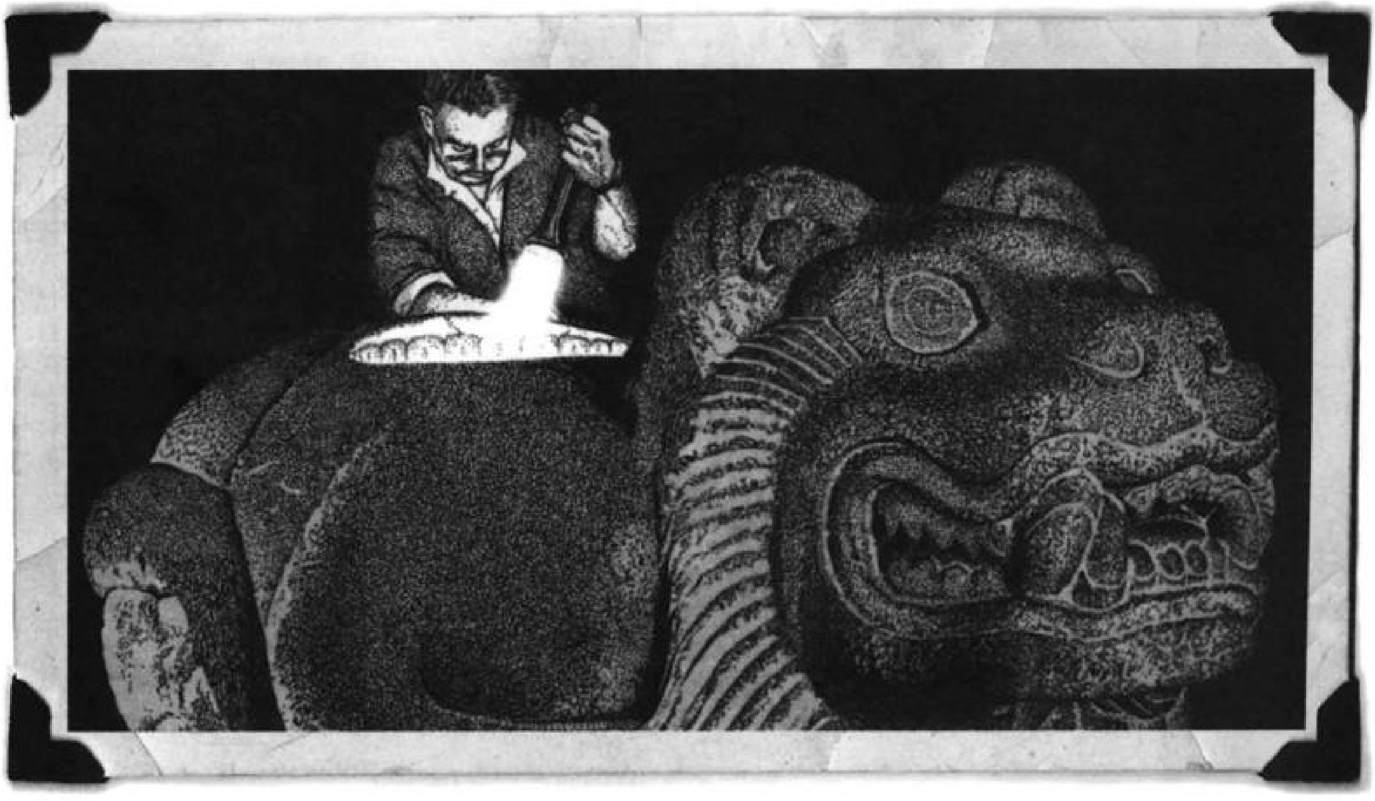
Skills: Animal Husbandry 42%, Astronomy 38%, Cthulhu Mythos 19%, Climb 49%, Drive Automobile 31%, First Aid 38%, Herding 57%, History 28%, Jump 39%, Listen 47%, Land Navigation 48%, Occult 32%, Aztec Occult 47%, Ride 54%, Spot Hidden 66%, Swim 53%

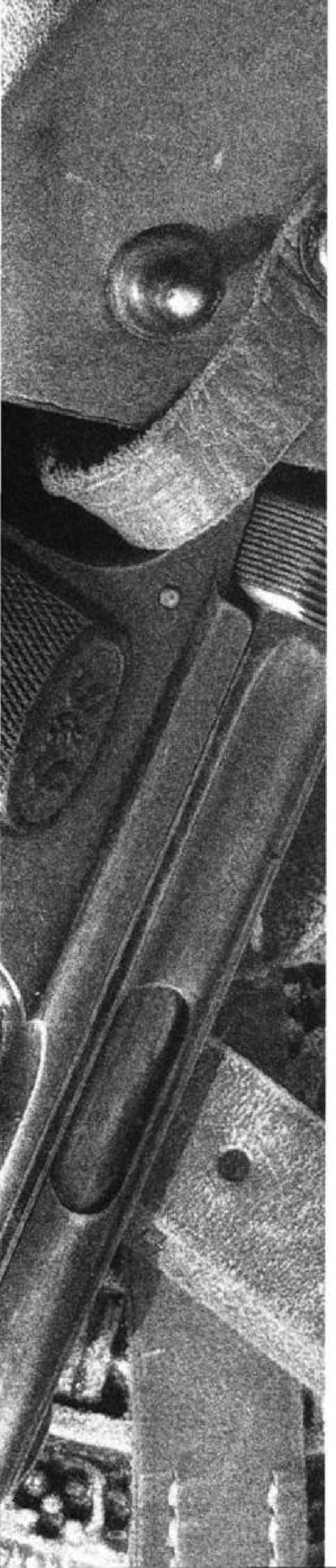
Languages: Spanish 64%, Nahuatl 61%

Attacks: Knife 40%, 1D4+2+dm damage (dagger)
Handgun 35%, 1D10 damage (.38 revolver)

Spells: Call/Dismiss Coatlicue (Shub-Niggurath), Create Gate, Dread Curse of Azathoth, Voorish Sign

Notes: Rafael is Conchita's apprentice, following her every whim due to his belief that Conchita is truly one of the Blessed of the Mother Goddess. He strives to increase his power base and longs to become one of the Blessed as well. He will normally stay at Conchita's cottage and will claim to be the caretaker if anyone stops by. Rafael also tends to the goats (sacrificial victims) that are kept penned up at the cottage.





Cultist Guards

	José	Bernal	Diego	Carlos
STR	11	12	14	17
DEX	15	10	11	10
INT	11	15	12	10
CON	13	9	12	16
APP	8	14	11	10
POW	10	14	12	11
SIZ	9	11	11	16
EDU	10	12	8	5
SAN	0	0	0	0
Luck	50	70	55	55
Hits	11	10	12	16
Age	17	28	20	24
Damage Modifier:	+0	+0	+1D4	+1D6

Nationality: Mexican

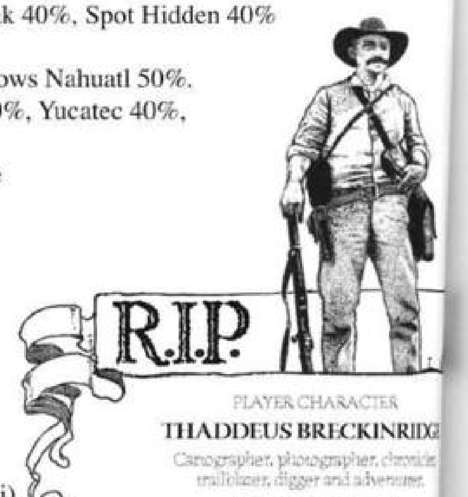
Skills Common to All: Hide 30%, Listen 40%, Sneak 40%, Spot Hidden 40%

Spells: Bernal knows Dread Curse of Azathoth

Languages: All know Spanish 60% to 80%. José knows Nahuatl 50%. Diego knows Yucatec 50%. Bernal knows Nahuatl 60%, Yucatec 40%, and English 40%.

Attacks: All have Fist/Punch 60%, 1D3+dm damage

José:
  Knife 57%, 1D6+dm damage (large knife)
  Garrote 43%, strangulation damage
Bernal:
  Knife 41%, 1D4+2+dm damage (fighting knife)
Diego:
  Sword 42%, 1D8+1+dm damage (macuahuitl)
  Knife 38%, 1D4+2+dm damage (fighting knife)
Carlos:
  Sword 45%, 1D8+1+dm damage (macuahuitzoctli)



PLAYER CHARACTER

THADDEUS BRECKINRIDG

Cartographer, photographer, chronicle
trailblazer, digger and adventurer.

Died October 13th, 1923

"What's that funny noise...!"

Digsite Workers

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
STR	13	12	15	13	11	12	14	10
DEX	10	12	15	12	13	11	14	13
INT	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	11
CON	12	13	16	13	14	12	12	13
APP	12	15	11	13	13	12	10	11
POW	12	13	17	11	13	12	9	15
SIZ	10	9	12	13	10	12	15	11
EDU	10	12	8	11	8	12	9	10
SAN	59	62	84	52	64	58	41	75
Luck	60	65	85	55	65	60	45	75
Hits	11	11	14	13	12	12	14	12
Age	18	20	17	25	29	15	22	34
Damage Modifier:	+0	+0	+1D4	+1D4	+0	+0	+1D4	+0

Nationality: Mexican

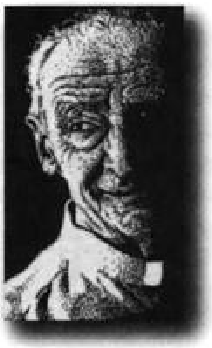
Skills Common to All: Farming (EDU x 5) + 1D10, Listen 30%, Manual Labor 75%, Ride 40%, Spot Hidden 35%, Swim 40%

Languages: English (EDU x 2), Spanish (EDU x 5)

Attacks: Fist/Punch 53%, 1D3+dm damage
  Choice of Digsite Tool:
    Knife 35%, 1D3+dm damage (trowel)

Large Club 35% 1D6+1+dm damage (pickaxe)
Large Club 35%, 1D8+1+dm damage (shovel)
Small Club 35%, 1D6+dm damage (small timber)

Notes: These men are local farmers that have been hired by the University of Mexico City officials to be the labor force behind the dig. They are dependable and hard-working following all reasonable orders as long as the orders are conveyed in a friendly manner. If blatant death or superstitious circumstances occur, some may leave. If a worker fails two SAN rolls consecutively or fails a SAN roll versus something extremely horrible, that worker will flee - packing his belongings or not depending upon the situation.



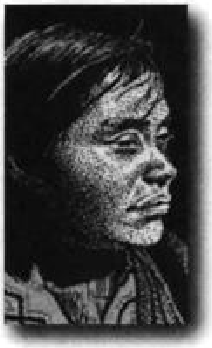
Father Ignacio Perez, Devout Catholic Priest, 61
Nationality: Guatemalan
STR 10 **CON** 12 **SIZ** 12 **INT** 14 **POW** 15
DEX 8 **APP** 10 **EDU** 14 **SAN** 69 **HP** 12
Damage Modifier: +0

Skills: Biblical Knowledge 81%, Fast Talk 22%, Give Eulogy 76%, History 27%, Library Use 62%, Listen 52%, Occult 33%, Persuade 72%, Psychology 61%, Preach Sermon 87%, Spot Hidden 40%

Languages: Spanish 78%, English 52%, Latin 63%, Nahuatl 41%

Attacks: None above base.

Notes: Father Perez is the religious leader of the town of Texcoco. His words are held in high regard by most in the community. He believes that Antonio and Miguel did not die by animal attacks, but were murdered by some supernatural entity. It is just a feeling he has and it will take some persuasion to get him to admit this. The only clue to this belief is in Miguel's eulogy where Father Perez alludes to "an evil amongst us." Unfortunately, it is extremely possible that Father Perez will become a victim due to his beliefs.



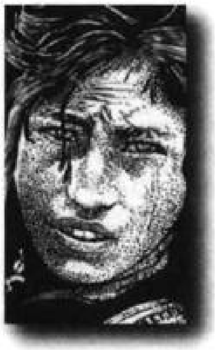
Ana Hernandez, Widow, 19
Nationality: Mexican
STR 7 **CON** 11 **SIZ** 10 **INT** 10 **POW** 9
DEX 12 **APP** 13 **EDU** 9 **SAN** 42 **HP** 11
Damage Modifier: +0

Skills: Assert Blame 79%, Cook 64%, Cry Sadly 67%, Grieve 78%, Mourn 81%, Scream Hysterically 47%

Languages: Spanish 51%, English 32%

Attacks: None above base.

Notes: Ana is the grieving widow of Antonio Hernandez, Emilio's worker who discovered the first stela and reported it to the University of Mexico City officials. She is extremely saddened by the loss of her husband. She is deeply upset by the circumstances surrounding the death of her husband and believes there is something happening "out of the normal" in the area around the digsite. Ana blames Emilio for Antonio's death although one will have to succeed in a Persuade roll in order to elicit this information. She will state that he was killed in total darkness (a reference to the New Moon). Ana is a devout Catholic but has a small belief in the supernatural.



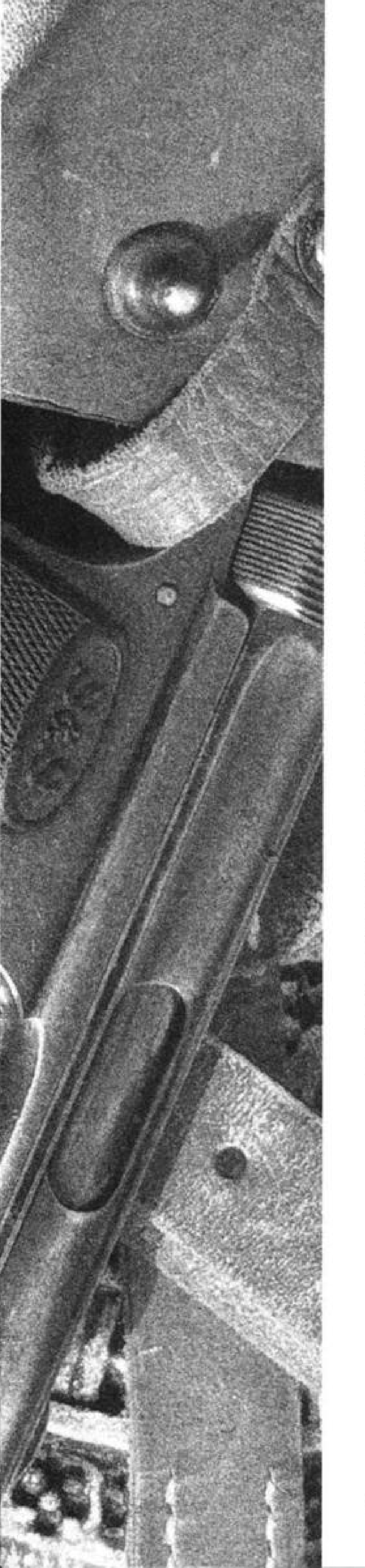
Maria Benevides, 20
Nationality: Mexican
STR 8 **CON** 12 **SIZ** 11 **INT** 11 **POW** 10
DEX 10 **APP** 13 **EDU** 8 **SAN** 49 **HP** 12
Damage Modifier: +0

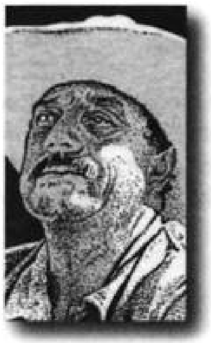
Skills: Cook 67%, Cry Sadly 63%, Grieve 75%, Mourn 84%

Languages: Spanish 50%, English 24%

Attacks: None above base.

Notes: Maria is the widow of Miguel Benevides, the digsite worker that discovered the statue of the were-jaguar and was subsequently murdered by Emilio. Maria is deeply grieving the death of Miguel. She is in such a state of mourning that she will not want to or be able to talk about his death. Father Perez will act like a protective parent and not allow anyone to harass Maria.



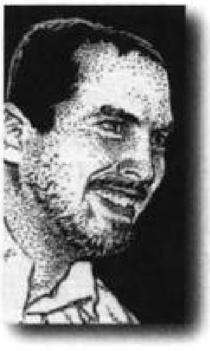


Vasco Payón, Capitán, 48
Nationality: Mexican
STR 13 **CON** 12 **SIZ** 13 **INT** 11 **POW** 11
DEX 13 **APP** 10 **EDU** 10 **SAN** 53 **HP** 13
Damage Modifier: +1D4
Education: Grade School
Skills: Climb 41%, Dodge 31 %, Drive Automobile 27%, Fast Talk 36%, First Aid 38%, Hide 41%, Jump 42%, Law 22%, Listen 49%, Psychology 27%, Ride 53%, Sneak 42%, Spot Hidden 52%, Swim 33%, Throw 34%, Track 36%
Languages: Spanish 57%, English 26%
Attacks: Fist / Punch 59%, 1D3+dm damage
Handgun 43%, 1D10 damage (.38 Smith & Wesson revolver)
Rifle 37%, 2D6+4 damge (Mauser rifle)
Small Club 51%, 1D6+dm damage (nightstick)

Notes: Vasco is the police chief of Texcoco. He is in his late 40s, and his still black hair is slightly balding. He has headed the investigations of the deaths of both Antonio and Miguel. As long as the Investigators act cordial, he will tell them general details that he gathers. Vasco believes that the deaths were caused by animals and that no foul play was involved. The death of Father Perez along side the dead (and previously buried) body of Miguel may change his mind.

POLICIA	Chico	Eduardo	Jaime
STR	14	15	10
DEX	12	15	11
INT	12	14	10
CON	12	11	15
APP	17	10	11
POW	15	17	13
SIZ	14	11	16
EDU	10	10	9
SAN	74	83	62
Luck	75	85	62
Hits	13	11	16
Age	17	18	22
Damage Modifier:	+1D4	+1D4	+1D4

Nationality: Mexican
Skills Common to All: Climb 39%, Hide 30%, Jump 44%, Listen 40%, Ride 30%, Sneak 40%, Spot Hidden 40%, Throw 35%, Track 30%
Languages: Spanish 50%
Attacks: Fist / Punch 55%, 1D3+dm damage
Handgun 35%, 1D10 damage (.38 Revolver)
Rifle 30%, 2D6+4 damage (Mauser Bolt-action Rifle)
Small Club 40%, 1D6+dm damage (Nightstick)



Dr. Roberto Grijalva, M.D., 26
Nationality: Honduran
STR 7 **CON** 10 **SIZ** 11 **INT** 13 **POW** 11
DEX 14 **APP** 11 **EDU** 15 **SAN** 68 **HP** 11
Damage Modifier: +0
Education: M.D. from University of Mexico City
Skills: Accounting 25%, Anthropology 26%, Biology 47%, Botany 12%, Chemistry 31%, Credit Rating 35%, First Aid 61%, Library Use 36%, Listen 33%, Medicine 57%, Persuade 23%, Pharmacy 42%, Psychology 34%, Ride 25%, Spot Hidden 60%, Zoology 19%
Languages: Spanish 77%, English 38%, Latin 36%, French 23%,

German 21%

Attacks: None above base.

Notes: Dr. Grijalva, 26, is a recent graduate of the University of Mexico City and is a new doctor to the town. Roberto has had few experiences with violent death like the ones that have occurred. He is therefore a little unsure of the situation that has happened, and he quickly dismissed the deaths as natural occurrences resulting from animal attacks.

Zombies, Guardians of the Grotto

STR 17 **CON** 14 **SIZ** 12 **POW** 1 **DEX** 7

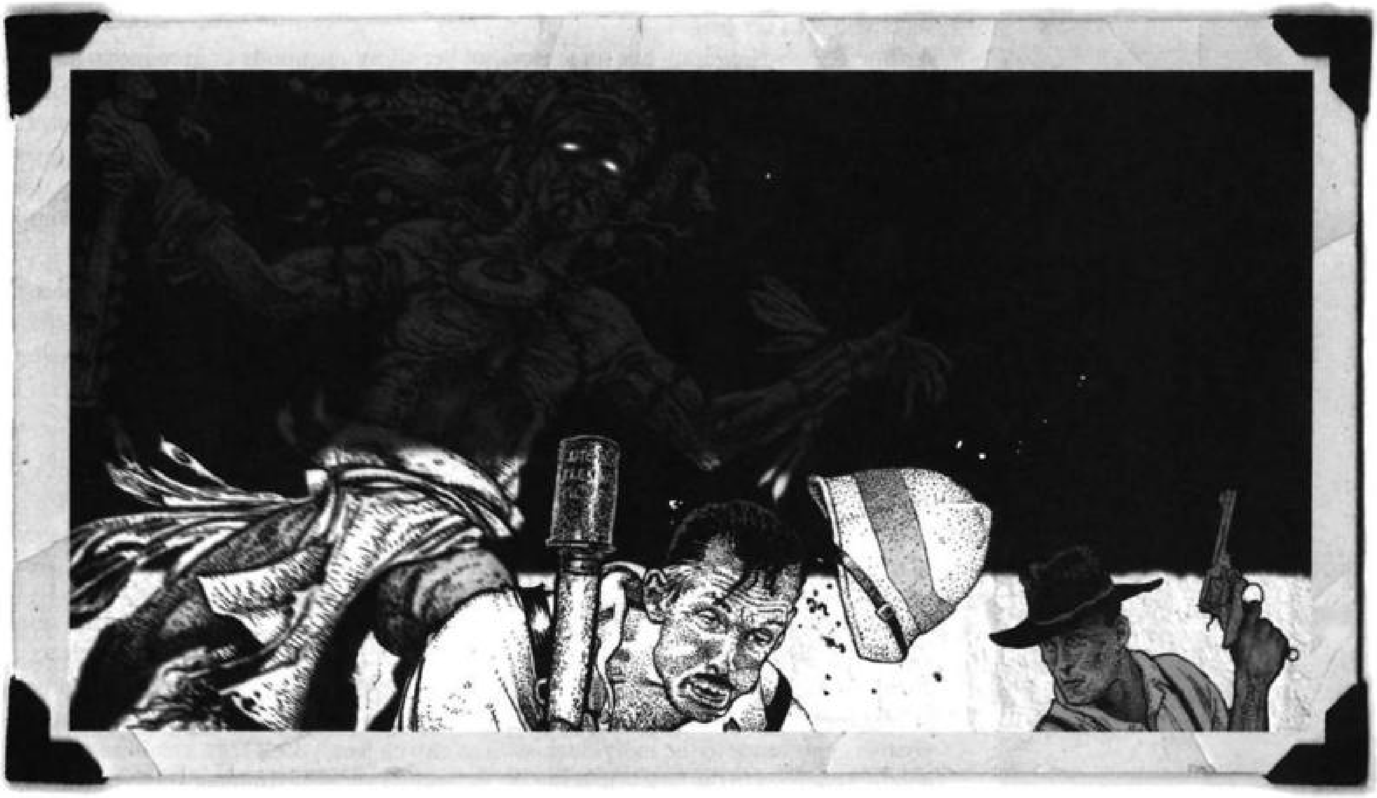
Damage Modifier: +1D4

Attacks: Bite 35%, 1D3 damage
Sword 25%, 1D6+1+dm damage (macuahuitl)

Armor: None, but all impaling weapons do 1 pt, all other weapons do half damage

San Loss: 1/1D8 Sanity points to see a zombie.

Notes: These are two zombies created by Emilio to guard the entrance to the underground grotto. They are regaled as ancient, Aztec warriors and will attack all intruders until destroyed.



Typical Dark Young

STR 44 **CON** 18 **SIZ** 44 **INT** 14 **POW** 20 **DEX** 17 **Move** 8 **HP** 31

Damage Modifier: +2D6

Attacks: Tentacle 80%, dm+STR drain damage
Trample 40%, 2D6+dm damage

Armor: Dark Young are of non-terrene material and make up, so any successful firearm attack does 1 point of damage, with an impale doing 2 points. Shotguns loaded with shot do minimum possible damage. Melee weapons do normal damage. All attacks pertaining to heat, blast, corrosion, electricity, or poisoning do no damage.

Spells: Call/Dismiss Shub-Niggurath, Contact Nyarlathotep, Create Gate, Powder Drain, Shrivelling, Summon/Bind Dark Young, Wither Limb

Skills: Sneak 60%, Hide in Woods 80%

Sanity Loss: 1D3/1D10 Sanity points to see a Dark Young

Notes: This is a sample specimen of the Dark Young that is summoned on the New Moon to investigate / patrol / murder around the site of the dig. It has been given orders to stay hidden unless it can perpetrate its evil with complete discretion.

Shub-Niggurath, the Dark Mistress of the Moon

STR 72 **CON** 170 **SIZ** 120 **INT** 21 **POW** 70
DEX 28 **Move** 15 **HP** 145
Damage Modifier: +11D6
Attacks: Tentacle 100%, automatic catch
Trample 75%, 11D6 damage
Bite 100%, 1D6 STR drained per round damage

Attack Notes: Shub-Niggurath has a multitude of tentacles, but only one will attack a given victim in a round. With a successful catch, the victim is drawn to the goddess' body to be drained of body fluids by one of her many mouths, the bite permanently draining 1D6 STR from the victim per round. Shub-Niggurath can also trample beings of SIZ 60 or less. The trample attack which averages 10-20 yards across is effective against all such beings in her path.

Armor: Shub-Niggurath has no armor, but her slimy mist body is immune to physical weapons. Magical weapons, or fire, electricity, or similar energies damage her normally. Her ropy tentacles and gooey vapors can rejoin, effectively allowing her to regenerate points of damage. Each magic point she expends enables her to heal 2 points of damage.

Spells: Shub-Niggurath knows at minimum all spells pertaining to the Outer Gods; she is known to have imparted Create Gate, Dread Curse of Azathoth, and Voorish Sign to favorites.

Sanity Loss: 1D10/1D100 Sanity points to see Shub-Niggurath.

NEW SPELLS AND RITUALS

Ritual of Rebirth

The Ritual of Rebirth is only undertaken by the most dedicated servants of the Mother Goddess. The individual is engulfed within one of the many manifesting sexual orifices of Shub-Niggurath. Then he/she undergoes a mutating process which vastly changes the body. The rebirth from the vagina of Shub-Niggurath completes the process turning the individual into one of the "Blessed of Shub-Niggurath." Results often add a goatish appearance to the individual, such as cloven feet, goat's legs, small horns, subtle goatlike changes to the face -- making the individual appear extremely similar to the satyr of ancient Greek legends. Some of the Blessed remain mostly humanoid. Yet others are horribly mutated into monstrous things. No matter which form the individual is reborn as, the rebirth endows the individual with "immortality," to the extent that he/she will never grow old or die due to aging. Undergoing the Ritual of Rebirth reduces the individual's SAN to zero.

Send Dreams

This is actually a variant of the normal spell and works just the same except that Emilio focuses the magic through the Smoking Mirror instead of using the usual copper bowl.

NEW CREATURES

Blessed of Shub-Niggurath, Gof'nn hupadgh Shub-Niggurath

[taken from *The Creature Companion* from Chaosium]

These creatures are the most dedicated servants and priests of Shub-Niggurath, created by the Black Goat from (usually) willing sacrificial victims. Shub-Niggurath, or one of her avatars, accepts the human sacrifice by swallowing them through one of her many orifices. Later, they are "reborn" having suffered great mutations in the procedure.

The Blessed of Shub-Niggurath are a mutant race, some having the semblance of satyrs, others being mostly humanoid, and still others having been horribly mutated into monstrous beings. No two of these creatures are alike, although they are almost always humanoid.

attribute	rolls	average
STR	3D6	10-11
CON	3D6+6	16-17
SIZ	2D6+6	13
INT	3D6	10-11
POW	3D6+6	16-17
DEX	3D6	10-11
Move 8		
HP 15		

Av. Damage Modifier: None.

Attacks: Claw 30%, 1D6+dm damage
Bite 30%, 1D4 damage
Gore 20%, 1D6+dm damage

Armor: None, but the Blessed regenerate 1D6 hit points each round until dead.

Spells: All of the Blessed of Shub-Niggurath know Call Shub-Niggurath plus 1D6 other spells.

Sanity Loss: 0/1D4 Sanity points to see most Blessed of Shub-Niggurath; 1/1D6 for really horrible mutations.

Were-jaguar

It was claimed that the greatest Mesoamerican shamans were nahualli, form-changers who could undergo a transformation taking the form of the jaguar. This entity was known as a were-jaguar, half-man and half-beast - a snarling, monstrosity humanoid in form but with the head, feet, and claws of a jaguar. As with the case of other lycanthropes, the Full Moon had a great effect upon the were-jaguar sometimes causing an instantaneous change. But unlike the case of other lycanthropes, the were-jaguar could usually control the transformation except at the times of the Full Moon as previously stated.

attribute	rolls	average
STR	6D6	21
CON	2D6+6	13
SIZ	3D6	10-11
INT	1D6+2	5-6
POW	2D6+6	13
DEX	2D6+6	13
Move 12		
HP 11-12		

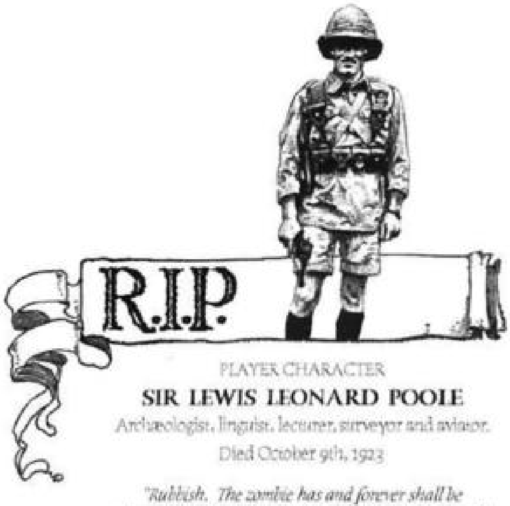
Av. Damage Modifier: +1D4 or +1D6

Attacks: Bite 35%, 1D8 damage
Claw 50%, 1D6+dm damage

Armor: In jaguar or man-beast form, the individual has 1 point hide armor and regenerates 1 hit point per round until dead.

Skills: Hide 60%, Track by Smell 90%

Sanity Loss: 0/1D8 Sanity points to see a were-jaguar.



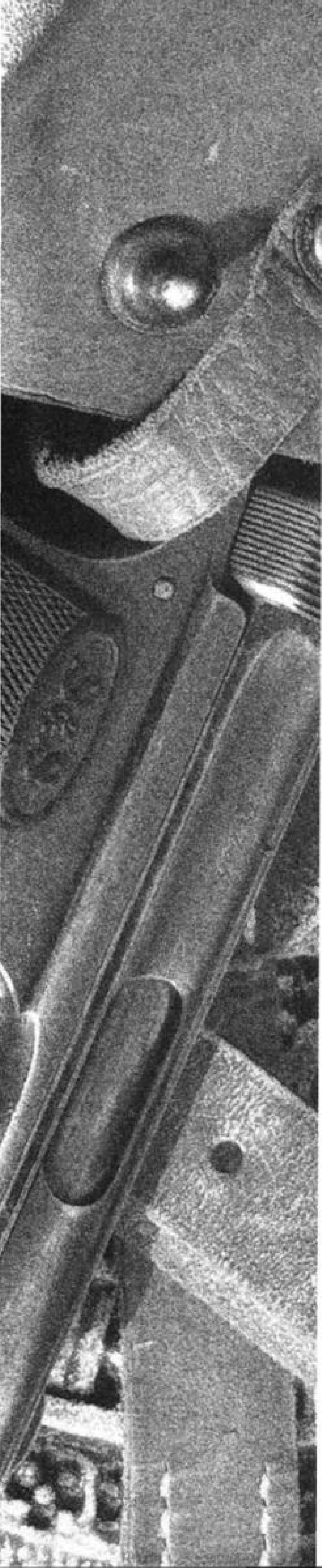
PLAYER CHARACTER

SIR LEWIS LEONARD POOLE

Archaeologist, linguist, lecturer, surveyor and aviator.

Died October 9th, 1923

"Rubbish. The zombie has and forever shall be the whimsical invention of fable, folklore and legend."



TIMELINE FOR SCENARIO

July 16: Construction crew members working for Emilio discover the first stela; one worker, Antonio, reports the find to officials at the University of Mexico City
July 27: Glowing light seen at digsite (Full Moon)
August 8: Arrangements have been made for a joint dig and the investigators are hired
August 12: (New Moon)
August 26: Glowing light seen at digsite (Full Moon)
September 10: Death of Antonio (by Dark Young; New Moon)
September 23: Investigators arrive in Mexico City and meet Dr. Calderon; Miguel discovers figurine
September 24: Death of Miguel (slain by Emilio; stelae glow again; Full Moon)
September 25: The funeral
October 10: Appearance of Dark Young near camp; strange hoofprint found nearby (New Moon)
October 17: Father Perez killed by the zombie of Miguel
October 24: Ritual of Rebirth occurs in grotto during Full Moon
November 8: Possible residual effects during New Moon

SAN
Rewards & Penalties

Action	Result
Destroy the digsite	+1D3 SAN*
Destroy the grotto	+1D4 SAN
Stop the Ritual	+1D6 SAN
Eliminate Conchita	+1D4 SAN
Eliminate Emilio	+1D6 SAN
Eliminate the rest of the cult	+1D6 SAN
Allow Ana or Maria to be slain	-1D6 SAN
Allow the Ritual to occur	-1D8 SAN

*This might be a difficult situation to explain to the Mexican officials and the Keeper should feel free to take whatever steps necessary such as jail, deportation, or loss of Credit Rating.

1923

■ New moon
● Full moon
▼ Solstice
▲ Equinox

January

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	●	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	■	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

February

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				●	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	■	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28			

March

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	●	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	■
18	19	20	▲	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

April

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
●	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	■	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	●					

May

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	■	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	●	31		

June

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	■	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	▼	23
24	25	26	27	●	29	30

July

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	■	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	●	28
29	30	31				

August

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
■	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
●	27	28	29	30	31	

September

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	■	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	▲	25	26	27	28	29
30						

October

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	■	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	●	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

November

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	■	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	●	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

December

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	■	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	▼
●	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

THE HERETICS

John H. Crowe, III

Players' Information

It is January of 1925 and the Miskatonic University Archaeology Department has obtained permission from the government of Mexico to explore, survey, and excavate the ruins of the ancient Mayan city of Mayapán. The department has been authorized by the University to assemble a capable team of experts to travel to Mexico and spend several seasons excavating this little-known site. It will take several months to assemble personnel and equipment for the expedition which is scheduled to depart in June, 1925.

Keeper's Information

The expedition is a genuine one. Last year (1924), the Carnegie Institution of Washington (C.I.W.) commenced a similar operation in the large city of Chichén Itzá which is located well east of Mayapán. This group was also in the running to excavate Mayapán, but Miskatonic's negotiator managed to get the Mexican government to agree to Miskatonic's offer. If, however, their team violates the terms of the Mexican contract or somehow abuses its privileges, the contract will be revoked and given to the C.I.W.

Miskatonic did have one advantage over the C.I.W. in its negotiations. A few years ago, the University came into possession of a decrepit, but legible journal written in the sixteenth century by a Franciscan friar named Inigo Ramirez. It was partly because of Ramirez that Miskatonic became interested in studying Mayapán. More on this important text is given in the next section.

As Mayan cities go, Mayapán is one of the younger ones. Established by the Toltecs during the second rise of Chichén Itzá, it outlasted that great city, but was destroyed prior to the arrival of the Spaniards in the early 1500s. Little is known about the site. Explorers have reported at least one large pyramid and, strangely, a defensive wall surrounding the ruins. This latter feature is very rare for Mayan cities and in itself is worthy of study. More on Mayapán, the ancient and modern Maya, and other important subjects is elaborated on in greater detail later.

Mayapán was a city devoted to, and allegedly erected by, the god Kukulcán. Kukulcán is the Mayan interpretation of the Aztec god Quetzalcóatl and both are portrayed as plumed serpents and as old, white men. What the investigators do not know, but will likely discover, is that two cults devoted to Kukulcán are loose in the Yucatán Peninsula. Neither wants the site disturbed by outsiders. These last vestiges of the ancient Mayan culture are corrupted and each worships a different interpretation of Kukulcán. One sees him as being a great serpent god and is actually worshipping Yig. The other sees him as a great wind god and is actually worshipping Ithaqua. For both groups, their imaginings of what and who Kukulcán is or might be is far from what the actual ancient Maya believed. Centuries of isolation, struggle and strife, and exposure to malign influences have twisted these two cults. Both are at odds with one another and view each other as heretics. Warfare between them has gone on unabated for centuries, but they occasionally curtail their hatred for each other to repel outsiders (Spanish conquistadores, Mexican government troops, modern Mayan farmers, explorers, archæologists, etc.).

Needless to say, the Miskatonic expedition is headed for disaster. Those who maintain cool heads and are shrewd and intelligent will have a good chance of surviving, and may even make the discoveries of their careers. On the other hand, the entire group could simply disappear and be the source of a mystery that can never be explained.

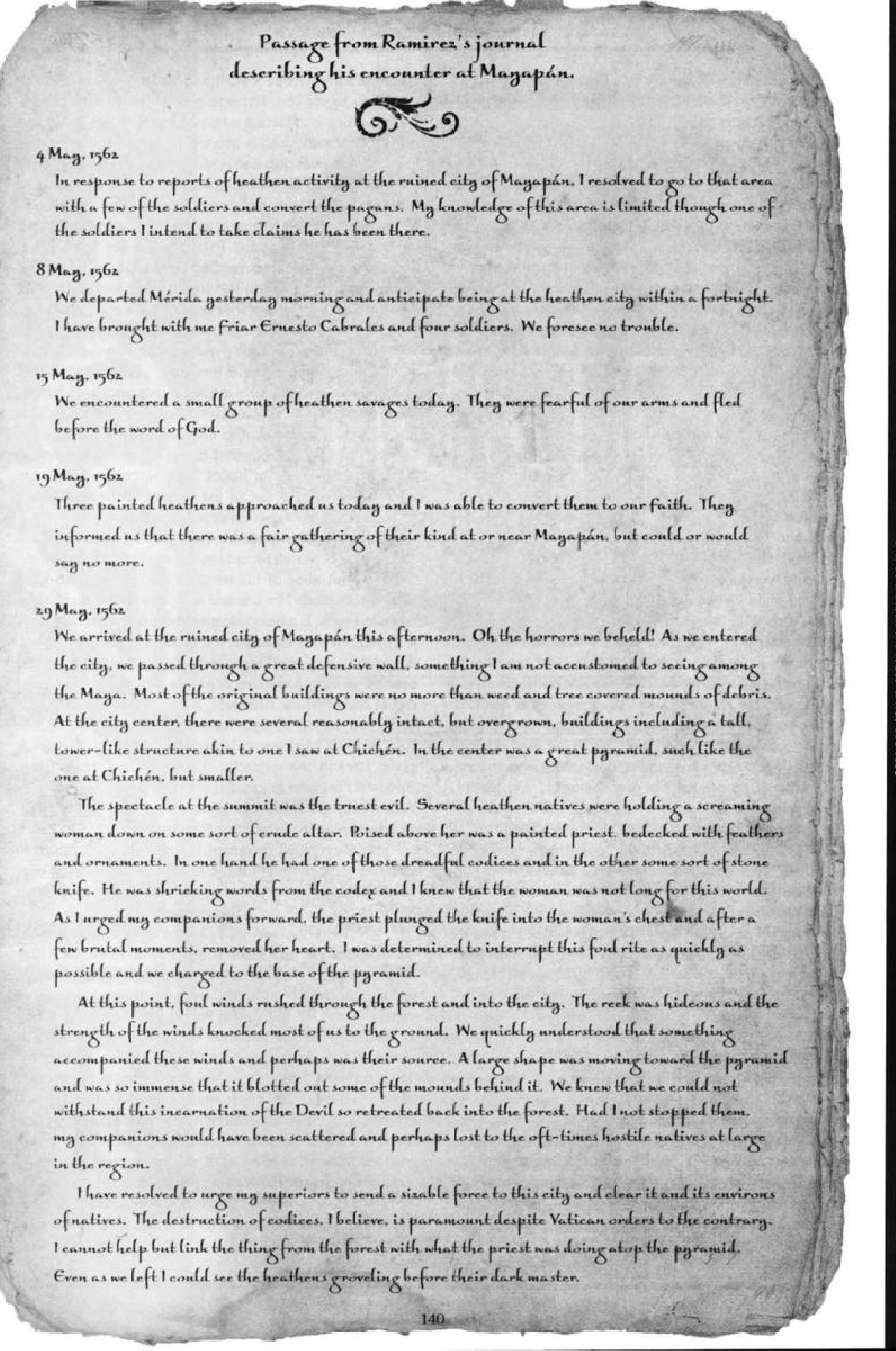
"The Heretics" is designed for three to eight characters of low to moderate experience. Guidelines for creating characters is given in the section entitled "Hiring On."

The Journal

Inigo Ramirez is a fictitious character who served alongside Diego de Landa during his time in the Yucatán. He was one of a half dozen or so friars who came to Mexico with Landa in the summer of 1549. A zealot like Landa, he fully supported the destruction of Mayan codices, but was less (or perhaps more?) pragmatic about it than his colleague. To Landa, codices were works of the Devil and were also a hindrance to the conversion of the Maya. Ramirez's knowledge was slightly greater. While seeking out Maya to convert, Ramirez and two assistants encountered a group conducting a human sacrifice. In itself, this was not unusual. Landa himself is alleged to have interrupted a few such rites and is said to have even managed to convert some of the worshippers in the process. Ramirez was, of course, outraged by what he saw…a young woman in the process of having her heart cut out atop the Temple of Kukulcán in Mayapán. Poised above her was a priest shrieking words he was reading from a great codex held before him. He was too late to intercede and could only watch helplessly as the foul result of the rites appeared. What he saw was a large, indistinct shape moving through the trees at the base of the pyramid accompanied by great winds and unimaginable howling. Whatever it was (Ramirez assumed simply it was an incarnation of Satan), the worshippers were grovelling before it. Ramirez fled and reported the incident to Landa. It is his statement to Landa which is one element that was considered before the active campaign of codex burning commenced. On page 140 is a transcript of the section of the journal describing Ramirez's encounter at Mayapán.

Ramirez's name has been lost to obscurity. He is mentioned in church records as having been present in the Yucatán, but none of his writings (i.e. his journal) have been discovered. His one and only literary work, if it can be called such, is a heavy, leather-bound journal that sat in a storeroom of a hacienda for literally centuries. It was completely neglected and overlooked until the turn of the century when renovations began to take place. The most recent owner of the hacienda, Antonio Gálvez, found the book and seeing its age, mailed it to an old friend, Dr. Badowski of Miskatonic University. More on Gálvez is given later in the scenario. Upon reading the volume, Badowski became fascinated with the possibility of excavating Mayapán. He has pushed for a University sponsored and manned expedition for many months. Only now are his efforts being rewarded. Badowski is scheduled to lead the expedition, but if the Keeper so chooses, he may suddenly suffer some sort of physical ailment that prevents his attendance. More on this is given later.

The investigators will have access to the journal and may read it, time permitting. Furthermore, they may take the journal with them if its safety and security can be ensured. It must be protected from the elements as well as general abuse. A successful Persuade followed by a successful Luck roll on the part of the group representative or leader will permit the group to take possession of the book. The few hundred parchment pages are bound in heavy black leather and as a unit, it is in marginal condition. It is still readable and the writing, though in archaic Spanish, is perfectly understandable to anyone fluent (60% or more) in modern Spanish (i.e. no skill roll is required for fluent speakers of Spanish). Reading this book takes two weeks. At first, it is rather dry and boring and documents Ramirez's departure from Spain and arrival in the New World. He soon came to the Yucatán where he lived out the rest of his



Passage from Ramirez's journal describing his encounter at Mayapán.

4 May, 1562

In response to reports of heathen activity at the ruined city of Mayapán, I resolved to go to that area with a few of the soldiers and convert the pagans. My knowledge of this area is limited though one of the soldiers I intend to take claims he has been there.

8 May, 1562

We departed Mérida yesterday morning and anticipate being at the heathen city within a fortnight. I have brought with me friar Ernesto Cabrales and four soldiers. We foresee no trouble.

15 May, 1562

We encountered a small group of heathen savages today. They were fearful of our arms and fled before the word of God.

19 May, 1562

Three painted heathens approached us today and I was able to convert them to our faith. They informed us that there was a fair gathering of their kind at or near Mayapán, but could or would say no more.

29 May, 1562

We arrived at the ruined city of Mayapán this afternoon. Oh the horrors we beheld! As we entered the city, we passed through a great defensive wall, something I am not accustomed to seeing among the Maya. Most of the original buildings were no more than weed and tree covered mounds of debris. At the city center, there were several reasonably intact, but overgrown, buildings including a tall, tower-like structure akin to one I saw at Chichén. In the center was a great pyramid, such like the one at Chichén, but smaller.

The spectacle at the summit was the truest evil. Several heathen natives were holding a screaming woman down on some sort of crude altar. Poised above her was a painted priest, bedecked with feathers and ornaments. In one hand he had one of those dreadful codices and in the other some sort of stone knife. He was shrieking words from the codex and I knew that the woman was not long for this world. As I urged my companions forward, the priest plunged the knife into the woman's chest and after a few brutal moments, removed her heart. I was determined to interrupt this foul rite as quickly as possible and we charged to the base of the pyramid.

At this point, foul winds rushed through the forest and into the city. The reek was hideous and the strength of the winds knocked most of us to the ground. We quickly understood that something accompanied these winds and perhaps was their source. A large shape was moving toward the pyramid and was so immense that it blotted out some of the mounds behind it. We knew that we could not withstand this incarnation of the Devil so retreated back into the forest. Had I not stopped them, my companions would have been scattered and perhaps lost to the oft-times hostile natives at large in the region.

I have resolved to urge my superiors to send a sizable force to this city and clear it and its environs of natives. The destruction of codices, I believe, is paramount despite Vatican orders to the contrary. I cannot help but link the thing from the forest with what the priest was doing atop the pyramid. Even as we left I could see the heathens groveling before their dark master.

FOR PERSONAL USE ONLY

years. His activities in the Yucatán were quite vigorous. In addition to being an early resident of the Franciscan monastery in Mérida, he actively attempted to convert the Maya to Christianity and by his own account, was successful in converting hundreds. However, one long section is quite interesting, especially to readers who are knowledgeable about the Cthulhu Mythos.

The section begins with an account of his encounter with the cultists at the Temple of Kukulcán in Mayapán. The city is well described including telling of a "caracol" and the great pyramid, both features later being reported by archæologists and explorers. Ramirez found the sacrifice to be extremely disturbing and this caused him to report the incident to his superiors. He later accompanied an expedition of forty Spanish soldiers into the rain forest in an effort to seek out and destroy the evil worshippers. This expedition never found the culprits, but did run across a number of ruin sites. An archæologist or historian reading this who succeeds in an Archæology roll will recognize Mayapán, Chichén Itzá, and a few other sites, but will not recognize one in particular. Described as a great ruined city, it does not match any of the known ones, not even Uxmal. This should be food for thought and may (should) have the investigators theorizing that perhaps there is another great city out in the Yucatán that has yet to be discovered. Unfortunately, the journal gives no clues as to the location of the mysterious ruins, only that they are deep in the wilderness.

Readers succeeding in a Psychology roll will conclude that Ramirez wholly and completely believed in what he was writing. It was no mere fabrication. However, trying to confirm his statements will be difficult. Aside from player aids, there are no benefits (skill bonuses) for reading the journal nor is there any SAN loss. Non-player characters, such as Badowski, will interpret the supernatural tale given in the text as being the result of a superstitious and overactive imagination. None will give it any credence though this one unlikely portion in the book is not enough to discredit the volume as a whole in the eyes of the Miskatonic staff.

In following up on what the journal documents, the investigators are in for a trying time. Church records in Mérida do confirm the existence of one friar named Inigo Ramirez who lived and worked in the Yucatán during the period described in the book. His death is not documented, but there is no record that he ever returned to Spain or even left the Yucatán Peninsula. Trying to find records or reports on Ramirez's findings or the findings of his expedition into the rain forest is a fruitless exercise. While many records have been preserved, some have been lost to neglect, accident, or stupidity. Investigators trying to seek out the Franciscan monastery, perhaps hoping to peruse its records, will be disappointed. It was forced to close down in 1820 and the occupants left the country completely.

Diego de Landa Biography

A real life historical figure is prominent in the background of "The Heretics." He is Diego de Landa, a Franciscan friar born in Cifuentes, Spain. Landa's writings including Landa's Relación de las cosas de Yucatán are often cited by writers and scholars and served to; in a way, preserve much knowledge on the Maya. Not surprisingly, Landa was an extremist by general twentieth century standards and was determined to convert the Maya to Christianity. In the process, he felt compelled to rout the Devil out of the Yucatán. He served as Bishop of Yucatán from 1571 until his death on April 29, 1579 and was buried in the Franciscan monastery at Mérida. Later, his remains were returned to his home town of Cifuentes.

Landa was a controversial figure who earned many enemies, both among the Maya and among Spaniards. It is what he did to the Maya that has earned him a notorious reputation among scholars. In addition to vigorous conversion attempts, many of which were allegedly successful and some of which involved him (allegedly) interrupting human sacrifices, Landa took notice of the large numbers of Mayan codices present in the region. He soon gained the trust of some Maya who presented him with a few as a gift. Considering how important codices were to the Maya, it is a sign that they truly trusted him. Landa was not worthy of this trust. He soon realized the value of these in Mayan culture. Seeing them as the work of the Devil, he conducted a campaign of destruction of texts and many a bonfire were fueled by them. This was conducted in violation of Papal orders which stated that documents from the foreign religions were to be brought to the Vatican for study. Between his active destruction of codices and neglect of others which escaped him, all but four have been lost to humanity. The consequences are that virtually all documented Mayan history and culture was effectively wiped out. Most of what remains is hidden in the mostly undeciphered Mayan glyphs carved on structures and monuments throughout southern Mexico and northern Central America.

A shrewd and intelligent man, Landa didn't burn the codices merely because they were "the work of the devil." While this was certainly a great part of the reason, also important was his realization that the codices were important in Mayan culture. He understood that destroying them would make it easier for the Mayan people to be converted and conquered.

From a more pragmatic standpoint, the journal is a useful research tool, much like the works of Diego de Landa. It describes over a dozen Mayan sites in detail plus gives an account of what the people were like in the 1500s. Not surprisingly, much space was devoted to Mayapán, thus ensuring a good description that cannot be missed short of virtually fumbling a Read Spanish roll.

Hiring On

First off, characters must be created for the expedition. Miskatonic will hire only those who are qualified for their positions, a list of which is given below along with the general qualifications. Note that in certain cases, college degrees (and in some cases graduate degrees), spe

cific work background (college professor, experienced archæologist, etc.), and other criteria are necessary in order to fill the position. Simply having the skills may not be enough since a resumé must be compiled, letters of reference submitted, and applications completed. The Keeper is the final judge as to what characters will be acceptable to the University and thus for the scenario. While this scenario is designed for new characters, those with low to moderate experience who meet the Miskatonic criteria may, at the Keeper's discretion, be used here. Survivors of previous portions of *The Mysteries of Mesoamerica* may be ideal for this scenario.

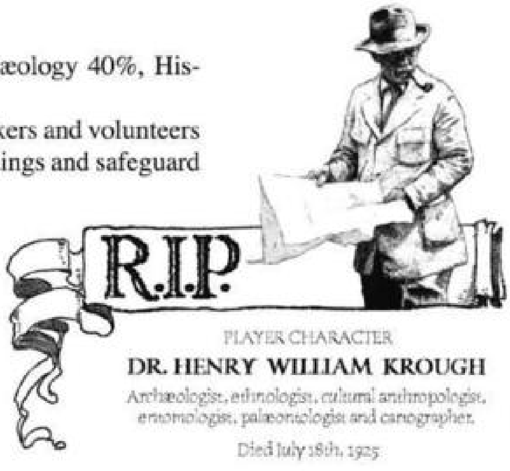
Anthropologist/Archæologist

Number Required (Ideal Number): 2 to 3

Minimum Skills: Anthropology 40%, Archæology 40%, History 50%, Occult 30%

Duties: Survey and map the city. Direct workers and volunteers to the most pressing areas. Document all findings and safeguard and catalog all recovered artifacts, no matter how minor or insignificant. Anthropologists and ethnologists have a secondary duty to study the local Mayan people.

Compensation: Annual income plus 10% or $3000, whichever is greater. Anyone in this position who is fluent (60% or more) in spoken Yucatec will be paid an additional premium of $250 in advance.



PLAYER CHARACTER

DR. HENRY WILLIAM KROUGH

Archæologist, ethnologist, cultural anthropologist, entomologist, palæontologist and cartographer.

Died July 18th, 1925

"SCIENCE!"

Digger

Number Required (Ideal Number): 10 to 15

Minimum Skills: none

Duties: Do all heavy labor including establishing a base camp and excavating the site. Obey all orders given by Miskatonic personnel. Prevent damage to the site.

Compensation: $1 per day plus $25 in advance pay. Bonus $25 for each that stays to the end of the digging season.

Interpreter

Number Required (Ideal Number): 1 to 2

Minimum Skills: Spanish 60% (spoken and written), Yucatec 60% (spoken)

Duties: Act as liaison between natives and the Miskatonic team. Also serve as liaison between government authorities and the team. Assist where possible as directed by the expedition leader.

Compensation: Annual income plus 10% or $2500, whichever is greater.

Physician

Number Required (Ideal Number): 1

Minimum Skills: First Aid 60%, Medicine 40%, Pharmacy 20%

Duties: Ensure expedition members remain healthy. Conduct periodic physicals as required. Maintain an inventory of medical supplies. Assist the expedition leader where possible.

Compensation: Annual income plus 10% or $2500 (if a qualified doctor) or $1500 (if a medic only), whichever is greater. A sum of $1,000 is paid as a premium in advance if the character is a qualified surgeon (Surgery skill of 40% or more).

Student Volunteer

Number Required (Ideal Number): 2 to 6

Minimum Skills: Anthropology 20%, Archæology 20%, History 30%, Occult 15%

Duties: Assist in excavating the site as directed by the archæologists. Oversee the native laborers in their duties.

Compensation: $250 if an undergraduate student or $350 if a graduate student plus twelve credit hours of Archæology credit free of charge. Those who distinguish themselves may become eligible for a Miskatonic scholarship at the end of the digging season.

At this point, the Keeper must make a basic decision. How much of the group is to consist of non-player characters? Is the group to be led by one? In the NPC section, a group leader, Dr. Stanislaw Badowski, is provided. If he is used, it is a means for allowing the Keeper to have additional control over the action within the scenario. However, if this seems unnecessary, he can be set aside and one of the (qualified) player characters can be assigned to be the group leader. The minimum requirements are below.

Expedition Leader
Number Required (Ideal Number): 1
Minimum Skills: Anthropology 40%, Archæology 40%, History 50%, Occult 30%, Persuade 40%
Duties: Lead the expedition to Mayapán. Oversee all operations and maintain overall command of the work schedule. Cooperate with local authorities whenever and wherever possible. Ensure the contract with the Mexican government is not violated. Maintain amicable relations with the local population.
Compensation: Annual income plus 10% or $5000, whichever is greater. Anyone in this position who is fluent (60% or more) in spoken Spanish or Yucatec will be paid an additional premium of $300 in advance.

Unassigned positions should be filled by NPCs of the Keeper's creation. Ultimately, most (or all) of the diggers hired in Mexico will be NPCs and stats on them are provided in the NPC section.

The Contract

Prior to taking any action, the investigators are made aware of certain facts. Of greatest initial concern is the conditions of the contract Miskatonic has with the Mexican government. If the contract is violated in any way, it may be voided, causing all Miskatonic personnel to be ejected from the country in disgrace. This would not only result in a huge waste of funds, materials, and time, but would be a professional humiliation to archæologists in the team.

The contract is simple. First, all local, state, and federal laws must be obeyed. Any violation of the law by expedition personnel could result in the contract being terminated and the violators prosecuted. Second, no artifact found, no matter how insignificant or trivial, may be removed from Mexico without the written consent of the government. Government inspectors will periodically visit the site and one Mexican archæologist will be on hand during the entire digging season. If anything is removed from the country illegally, legal measures will be conducted in the appropriate foreign courts and the contract will be terminated. Furthermore, such action will negate any possibility for Miskatonic to conduct digs anywhere in Mexico for many decades and would sully its reputation with all other

Languages

As is often the case in Call of Cthulhu, the languages known to investigators can be an important element in scenarios and campaigns. The ability to read and understand an ancient tome or the ability to effectively converse with a tribal leader or foreign police officer can make or break a scenario. "The Heretics" is no exception. While this is an American expedition, requiring all those hired at Miskatonic to be able to have at least a working knowledge (40%) of English, not all members have to be from the English speaking world. Furthermore, on arrival in Mérida, the expedition will hire a bevy of local labor to assist in digging and other manual chores. These locals, among whom may be a sprinkling of player characters, will all be Maya and thus all have fluency in spoken Yucatec. Sadly, literacy will be rare and many will either not know Spanish or will have an inadequate understanding of it.

Yucatec is the language of the modern Maya in the Yucatán Peninsula. It is a descendent of the ancient Mayan language, but unlike that language, it uses European characters, not glyphs. Furthermore, a minority of Mayans are literate. Having a capable interpreter within the group is important. Not only can he or she act as a liaison between the Miskatonic personnel and the Mayan workers, but he or she may act as a liaison with Mayans in the Yucatán and even with some government authorities. Important languages to know are Spanish and Yucatec though only a few need fluency in these.

Of similar importance is ancient Mayan, a language that is virtually lost to history. The Spaniards did an excellent job of burning Mayan texts and what wasn't lost to Spanish fires was lost to neglect. Today, only four Mayan codices remain and some of these are only fragmentary. Fortunately, other Mayan writings do survive since, like other cultures around the world, glyphs were painted on or carved into monuments, stelae, pottery, and structures. Knowledge of Mayan writing is still in its infancy at the time of this scenario. The Mayan calendar has been deciphered as has much of their arithmetic. However, much remains to be done with the language before full understanding can be made of the glyphs that are scattered all over Mexico, British Honduras (today called Belize), Guatemala, and Honduras. Worse, despite the bests efforts of scholars to try to understand the Mayan language, vandals are destroying monuments and artifacts while profiteers are trying to cart them away, destroying much in the process. This denies historians much needed information and hampers efforts to learn the language and recover lost knowledge. Investigators who wish to possess the ancient Mayan language may do so, but regardless of how many percentiles are developed, Mayan writing cannot be effectively read outside of calendars and mathematical computations. Almost certainly some of the investigators are going to Mayapán on the quest for more glyphs to photograph or copy for later study.

countries. Third, all findings must be shared with the Mexican government. Copies of all records must be provided at the end of each digging season or whenever operations cease. Failure to share information will be treated with utmost seriousness since it will be assumed a coverup is in progress and that artifacts are being stolen. Fourth, care must be taken with the site and all artifacts. Nothing is to be damaged or destroyed and negligence will not be tolerated.

Obviously, this contract is reasonable and the Carnegie Institution of Washington (C.I.W.) is working under a similar one in Chichén Itzá. The Mexican government will provide little assistance and local governments, such as the state governor in Mérida, may actually be somewhat of a hindrance. However, any requests made to the federal government in Mexico City will be taken seriously and will receive some attention, though not necessarily in a timely fashion. There will be no intentional hassling of the expedition, but local bureaucrats may annoy them with "routine" red tape and some may be angling for bribes. This is not to say that everyone will be out to gouge the expedition for money, but a few such encounters are virtually inevitable. The investigators are best served to pay the bribes and go on about their business quietly and without complaint.

The Political Situation

Mexican history in the several decades prior to this scenario is marked by violence, instability, and revolution. In the early years of the twentieth century, Porfirio Díaz ruled as a dictator and during his reign, he encouraged foreign investment and saw that railroads were built and expanded. However, those desiring democratic rule finally rose up against him and in November of 1910, a revolution began. Under the leadership of Francisco I. Madero, the revolutionaries took most of the country by 1911, forcing Díaz to resign. Madero was elected president by the people in October, 1911. The Madero administration was short-lived for a Mexican Army general, Victoriano Huerta, had him assassinated and seized power in 1913.

Huerta was quickly beset by numerous opponents who all wanted power and in the middle of this, U.S. Marines and sailors seized the city of Veracruz after a number of American sailors were arrested in Tampico for landing in a forbidden part of the city. The occupation of Veracruz lasted several months in 1914. In July of 1914, Huerta was overthrown by yet another general, Venustiano Carranza. Two of Carranza's followers, Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata, revolted against their former leader and both earned great names for themselves in the lore of Mexico before each was finally killed. While Villa was perceived by many as being little more than a brutal bandit, Zapata is often portrayed as a leader with progressive and enlightened ideas.

A new, liberal constitution was adopted in 1917 and in 1920, Carranza was killed in a revolution led by General Álvaro Obregón. A Provisional President was elected in May, 1920 and Obregón was then elected President in September of the same year. Under his administration, Mexico began to finally see some stability. He introduced reforms and in July, 1924 was succeeded (in a free election) by General Plutarco Elías Calles. It is Calles who is president during this scenario and under his administration, one of the notable incidents is his conflict with the Roman Catholic Church. His government closed Catholic schools and convents and ejected foreign priests from the country, much to the dismay and annoyance of the Papacy. In 1928, Obregón was once again elected president, but was assassinated before he could take office. The Mexican Congress then chose Emilio Portes Gil as temporary president. He was succeeded by Pascual Ortiz Rubio after new elections in 1929.

As is evident in the previous paragraphs, Mexico suffered from serious instability and political upheavals prior to 1920 and it was not evident to outsiders that the situation had resolved itself until the mid-1920s. Once Obregón was in power, the country saw some semblance of normalcy. This does not mean that poverty was gone or that injustice was abolished, but it was a promising step. By the time of this scenario, serious long term expeditions, like the one the investigators are about to embark on, could be contemplated by foreigners. Furthermore, political interference should not be expected unless the expedition does something to aggravate the government.

PLAYER CHARACTER
PROFESSOR WALTER VANBAALEN
Interpreter, epigrapher, epicurean and equestrian.
Died July 16, 1925

"It's only a recon. We'll be in and out in under five minutes..."

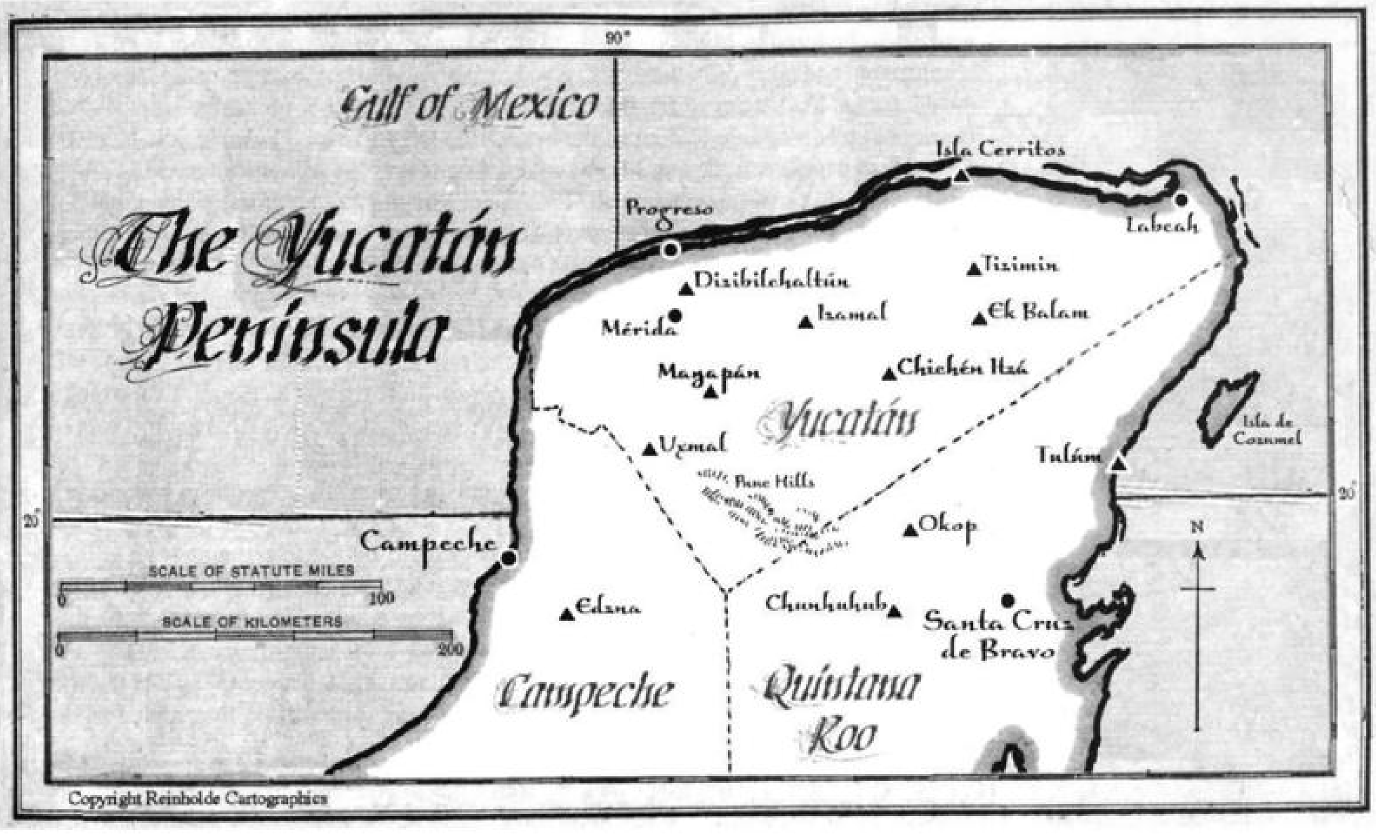
Logistics

Miskatonic is footing the entire bill for the operation. In addition to the pay already mentioned, all equipment is being purchased by the University, much of it in the United States. Basic tools, supplies, and so on have already been acquired and are sufficient for the needs of all. However, if anyone wishes to bring along personal belongings, they are welcome to, but will not be compensated for them in the event they are lost, damaged, or destroyed. One clause in the contract between the University and the government permits expedition personnel to carry firearms. All concerned recognize the legitimate threat posed by revolutionaries, insurrectionists, and bandits. Though legal to possess, arms may not be openly carried or worn in large towns or villages since this is may be a violation of local ordinances. Such offenses are generally punished with a fine of five dollars or so and (if the violator is rude or belligerent) possible confiscation of the weapon(s) in question and an even larger fine. This is not a military operation; any weapons brought should be appropriate for an archæological dig, not trench warfare. Personal sidearms, rifles, and shotguns are okay, but large stores of ammunition or purely military arms such as submachine guns and crew served weapons are unacceptable.

The Yucatán Environment

"The Heretics" is set in what is termed as the northern lowlands of the Yucatán Peninsula. This area is all territory north of the Puuc Hills (see map) and is very level. Made of hard and sometimes treacherous limestone, soil is often either lacking or is shallow. The limestone itself is porous and sinkholes are commonplace. Many of these have breached the water table, forming wells known locally as cenotes. These were important water sources for the ancient Mayan people who built cities around areas where cenotes were plentiful. Since surface water is rare, the importance of cenotes is obvious. The level terrain is sometimes broken by ridges and low hills no more than a few yards in height.

The wet season runs generally from May through October and in the area of Mayapán, the annual average level of precipitation is approximately thirty-eight inches. Maximum temperatures of 105°F are not uncommon, but this usually only occurs in March, April, and May. The average mean temperature for the region ranges from 71°F to 82°F. Where the land has not been cleared for agriculture, it is dominated by dry, scrub forest which is thorny,


90°
Gulf of Mexico
The Yucatán Peninsula
Isla Cerritos
Progreso
Labcah
Tizimin
Dizibilchaltún
Mérida
Izamal
Ek Balam
Mayapán
Chichén Itzá
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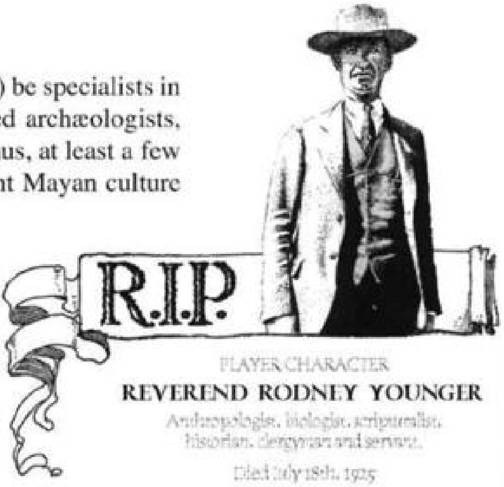
making travel difficult. Shade is limited. Considering the equipment provided by the University, the investigators should be well prepared for the forbidding environment.

Background Research

Some of the investigators will (should) be specialists in Mayan studies or at the very least be qualified archæologists, anthropologists, ethnologists, or historians. Thus, at least a few will know something of Mayan history, ancient Mayan culture and lore, modern Mayan culture and lore, regional geography, and the Yucatán Peninsula. In brief, each of these individuals knows something of the Maya, both ancient and modern, and the environment in which they are about to enter. Background research on these subjects is pointless since everything they need to know they already do.



PLAYER CHARACTER

REVEREND RODNEY YOUNGER

Anthropologist, biologist, scripturalist, historian, clergyman and servant.

Died July 18th, 1925

"Only virtuous, morally upright men can prevail here. All others shall perish."

However, there are certain things that can be checked. The current political situation is one. While the University stresses that the political climate is stable, wise investigators will check this out for themselves. Simply contacting the U.S. State Department and reading a few back issues of the New York Times can confirm that what the University says is accurate. Thus, the group can rest assured that they are not about to get caught up in some revolution or insurrection. Outside of this, the group may very well decide to conduct a little more personal research on a variety of subjects, but they will learn nothing the so-called "experts" in their group do not already know.

Starting Out

The actual trip begins on Monday, June 15, 1925. This is after the spring rains have passed and gives the expedition a full six months in their first season's dig. Equipment is loaded onto a southbound train and the expedition personnel (minus the diggers who are to be hired in Mérida) board Pullman cars. The train trip to Miami is swift and comfortable and takes only two days. Upon arrival in Miami, the equipment is trucked to the docks and loaded onto a freighter, the *Margaret S.* This U.S. registered ship has been chartered by Miskatonic to convey the expedition to Progreso, a Yucatán port city. The investigators have two days in Miami where they may relax, see the town, and conduct any last minute shopping or research. Everyone is staying in the Majestic Hotel, but how they spend their time is up to the individual. Everyone is expected to meet in the hotel lobby at 7:00 A.M. sharp on Wednesday, June 17 whereupon they will all travel by taxi to the freighter.

At 9:00 A.M., the *Margaret S.* will set sail. The voyage from Miami to Progreso is slow and uneventful and quarters aboard the ship are of passable quality. At approximately noon on June 19, the ship docks at Progreso and offloads its cargo. Everything is then trucked to a local warehouse while the investigators check into a local hotel. Progreso serves as a port for the state capital, Mérida, since that city is landlocked. A short rail line (twenty-three miles long) links the two cities and this is how the expedition will arrive in Mérida on the afternoon of June 20.

It is in Progreso where the investigators will first get to encounter the government bureaucracy. In all likelihood, everything will go smoothly, but abrasive investigators may get themselves in trouble. While entering the country should be no problem, if the group is later trying to escape, they may encounter some stumbling blocks. Customs officials may want to search baggage for stolen artifacts and other contraband and if they are somehow dodged, the investigators may find their ship will be intercepted by the gunboat *Zaragosa* that is based in the harbor. The Mexican Navy at this time is little more than a police force equipped with seven gunboats and a hodge podge of smaller craft, but they are efficient in their patrol duties despite their miniscule numbers. Progreso itself is a small, quiet community. It probably has little to interest the business-minded investigators, but is nevertheless a nice, clean, and restful town.

Mérida

Founded on January 6, 1542, Mérida is the capital of the state of Yucatán and was built on the ruins of the Mayan city of Tiho (also spelled T'ho). It is linked to the port of Progreso twenty-three miles away by a rail line and another runs down the coast to the city of Campeche to the south. Mérida is a growing city and is the largest in the entire Yucatán Peninsula (population 62,447 according to the 1921 census). The state of Yucatán covers an area of 15,989 square miles and supports a population of 358,221 (as of 1921), giving it a greater population than any of its neighbors. A surprising number of fine manor houses may be found in Mérida, most erected by the increasing numbers of people who became rich off the henequen boom of the late 1800s. Henequen is a yucca-like plant from which hemp (for rope) is made. It is widely cultivated in the Yucatán, especially in the area immediately around Mérida. Known as the "White City," "the City of Windmills," and the "Paris of the West," Mérida is an exceptionally clean city at this time and is quite beautiful. Due to its strategic location, it very often serves as an initial base for archæologists and explorers bent on examining ruins or exploring the rain forest. So numerous are the ruins in fact, that just on the trip between Progreso and Mérida is a Mayan site, the ruined city of Dzibilchaltún. In Mérida, the investigators can expect to find everything they might need for their expedition…pack animals, diggers, provisions, tools, and other supplies and equipment. Spanish is the dominant language here, but Yucatec is spoken by many and it is probably the last point in this state where Spanish will be more useful than native Mayan tongues.

Acquiring pack animals, laborers, and supplies will take up anywhere from six days to two weeks, depending on the efficiency of the group. In this time, it is customary for an expedition leader to pay a visit to Governor Vasquez in the interests of diplomacy and goodwill. To not at least attempt to do so might be viewed as some sort

Morley Biography

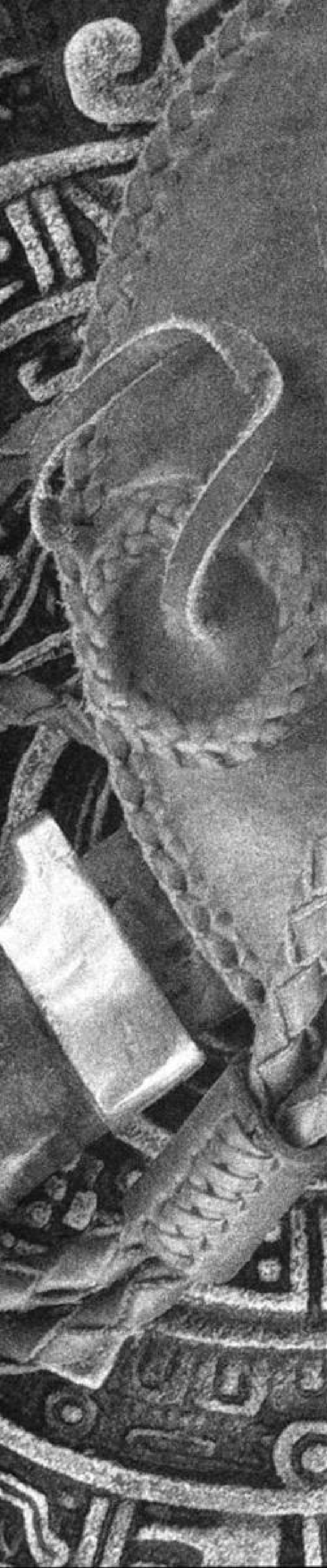
Sylvanus Griswold Morley is a real life figure. Born 1883, he was a Harvard graduate and noted archæologist at the time of this scenario. Morley's first digs were carried out in the American Southwest, but soon, it was the peoples of Mesoamerica that attracted his attention. By the time of this scenario, he had already explored much of the Yucatán Peninsula as well as Guatemala, western Honduras, and other Mayan areas. His credentials are impeccable; only a relative handful of his contemporaries can match his knowledge, experience, and dedication.

A keystone in his career was the excavation of Chichén Itzá. This once magnificent city was a central power during later stages of Mayan history, but had lain in ruins long before the arrival of Spanish troops. The prestigious Carnegie Institution of Washington (C.I.W.) had hoped to excavate the site and Morley made his first application to the Mexican government in 1913. However, due to political turmoil in that country, the application wasn't approved for ten years. In the mean time, Morley spent many seasons in Mayan regions, expanding his knowledge and dating city sites. He even spent the final two years of the First World War as a U.S. Navy operative in Mexican coastal areas scouting out likely places where German submarines might land.

In 1923, the Chichén Itzá application was finally approved with one of the conditions being that no artifacts were to leave the country. This was something that the C.I.W. and Morley had no problem agreeing to. Actual digs began in 1924 and during this scenario, one season of excavating is past and another is in progress. The digs at Chichén Itzá continued every season from 1923 through 1940. Sadly, Morley and his colleagues have been criticized by later scholars for their handling of the dig for they seemed more eager to reconstruct buildings and monuments than gathering historical knowledge. Even after 1940, further exploration was necessary and today, most scholars would probably agree that the site is still inadequately researched.

Sylvanus G. Morley, known as "Vay" to his friends, was known as a diplomatic and extremely patient man. The ten year wait for the Chichén Itzá dig application is only one example of this. Morley's patience with natives both Hispanic and Mayan probably saved his life on more than one occasion and certainly allowed him to operate pretty much unhindered despite political chaos, corruption, and paranoid and sometimes superstitious natives. He found, among other things, that treating the Maya with respect could get one very far. He had a great admiration and affinity for the Maya and was greatly respected by many of the residents of southern Mexico, Guatemala, and Honduras. Morley did have his fair share of faults and did create theories later disproved or modified (he was a great believer in the theory that the Maya were somehow less violent and warlike than Europeans, an assertion that was later disproved). While he is certainly not the greatest or most capable archæologist to have worked in this area, few would contest the claim that he made valuable contributions to the field.

In interviewing Morley, the investigators can learn much. If they are in a rush, they are still well served to have dinner with him and learn from him rather than learn the hard way. By all accounts, Morley was a very likable man and the Keeper should ensure that he is portrayed as such. Exactly what he tells them is up to the individual Keeper (based on what the investigators ask, of course), but he can give pointers on how to interact with local natives and how to deal with area and regional government. Due to personal commitments, he cannot accept any invitations to visit the investigators at their Mayapán dig site.



of social snub and the group can ill afford to get on the governor's bad side. Such a visit will likely monopolize an entire afternoon or even an entire day (if things go very well) for the expedition leader. Nothing concrete will be gained aside from amicable relations with the governor and most time will likely be spent on small talk and chit chat.

The governor could very well play a greater role later in the scenario. Emilio Vasquez (a fictitious character) is a well bred, well mannered gentleman who seems like he was born to be in a position of authority. Visiting European and American archæologists are a great social event for him and he will always treat such people with grace and courtesy. While he knows relatively little about archæology and Mayan history, he is eager to discuss the subject with visiting intellectuals. The initial meeting with the governor may be the only contact with him. Later, however, the relationship can become adversarial. If Calderon (an important NPC described in the next section) or someone else accuses the group of stealing or damaging artifacts or otherwise violating their contract, he will take the steps appropriate to safeguard the interests of his people and government. He will probably accept Calderon's word without question and almost certainly will if the expedition leader fails to accept his invitation at this early stage.

While visiting the governor or perhaps while touring the town, the investigators may encounter Sylvanus Morley, the leader of the C.I.W. expedition in Chichén Itzá. A biography of Morley is given adjacent for the Keeper's use. Morley, known as "Vay" to his friends, is an extremely likeable gentleman and one of the foremost names in Mayan archæology in 1925. He will be eager to converse with Miskatonic personnel on various topics related to their activities in the Yucatán. The C.I.W. expedition in Chichén Itzá will inevitably enter the conversation and the group will be invited to visit the site. Any such visit, though interesting and informative, is largely irrelevant and serves to only expend time on something other than the mission at hand.

Mérida does have much of interest to the investigators. The Universidad de Yucatán (University of Yucatán) is the only institution of higher learning in the area and was founded in the nineteenth century. A surprisingly good museum is in Mérida. Called the Anthropology and History Museum, it was founded in 1895 and specializes in Mayan history and culture. While museums in Mexico City have monopolized many choice objects, enough is here to impress many of the group members. Attached to it is the archæological library and it is of greater importance to the investigators. Those looking through it must have an adequate knowledge of Spanish for perhaps eighty percent of the texts are in that language. The library is quite good. It contains a respectable selection of archæological texts and documents including notes from earlier explorers and even some original documents. One block from the university is another library, the Biblioteca Cepada Peraza which was founded in 1867.

The Liaison

While in Mérida, the expedition is joined by Dr. Carlos Calderon, an archæologist contracted by the Mexican government to work with the Miskatonic team. Calderon's primary responsibility is to ensure the site is not abused and nothing is removed without government permission. Professional archæologists and the like in the group may, with a successful Knowledge roll, know of Calderon and his reputation. He has long worked with museums in Mexico City and has been involved in digs throughout Mexico and the southwestern United States.

In truth, Calderon is of mixed ancestry. His father was a member of the Cult of Yig present deep in the Yucatán near the lost city of Xiuhepetl. His mother was a young Mexican woman captured and enslaved (and eventually sacrificed) by the cult. His identical twin brother, now titled and renamed "Kukulcán" for the cult, was often a rival when the boys were young. Calderon grew up in the tense atmosphere of a people constantly warring with a more powerful and entrenched enemy (the cult of Ithaqua). The fact that he was a twin did not make things any easier. In ancient Mayan and Aztec tradition, twins were often portrayed as either great heroes or potent villains. Thus, parents often killed one of twins born to them rather than run the risk of some curse of disaster befalling their village. His father, a member of the prestigious warrior class, saw this as an opportunity. Believing his children could lead the cult to glory, he began teaching them at an early age. Carlos was sent to "civilization" to acquire special education and teaching long unavailable to his people. Thus, he was fortunate to be raised in a Catholic school and ultimately was educated at some of Mexico's finest institutions of higher learning. His brother showed an aptitude for leadership and rituals and eventually rose to the highest position of leadership.

Carlos never forgot the plight of his people. Over the years, he maintained contact with them and eventually became one of their greatest priests and leaders. Only his brother has risen higher. The dual lifestyle was a challenge, though. Forced to maintain a false image that suited his life in Mexico City, he never felt comfortable despite his long association with the general population of the country. He has long looked for a means of wiping out the Cult of Ithaqua without revealing the presence of his own cult and causing the destruction of the holy city long occupied by the heretics.

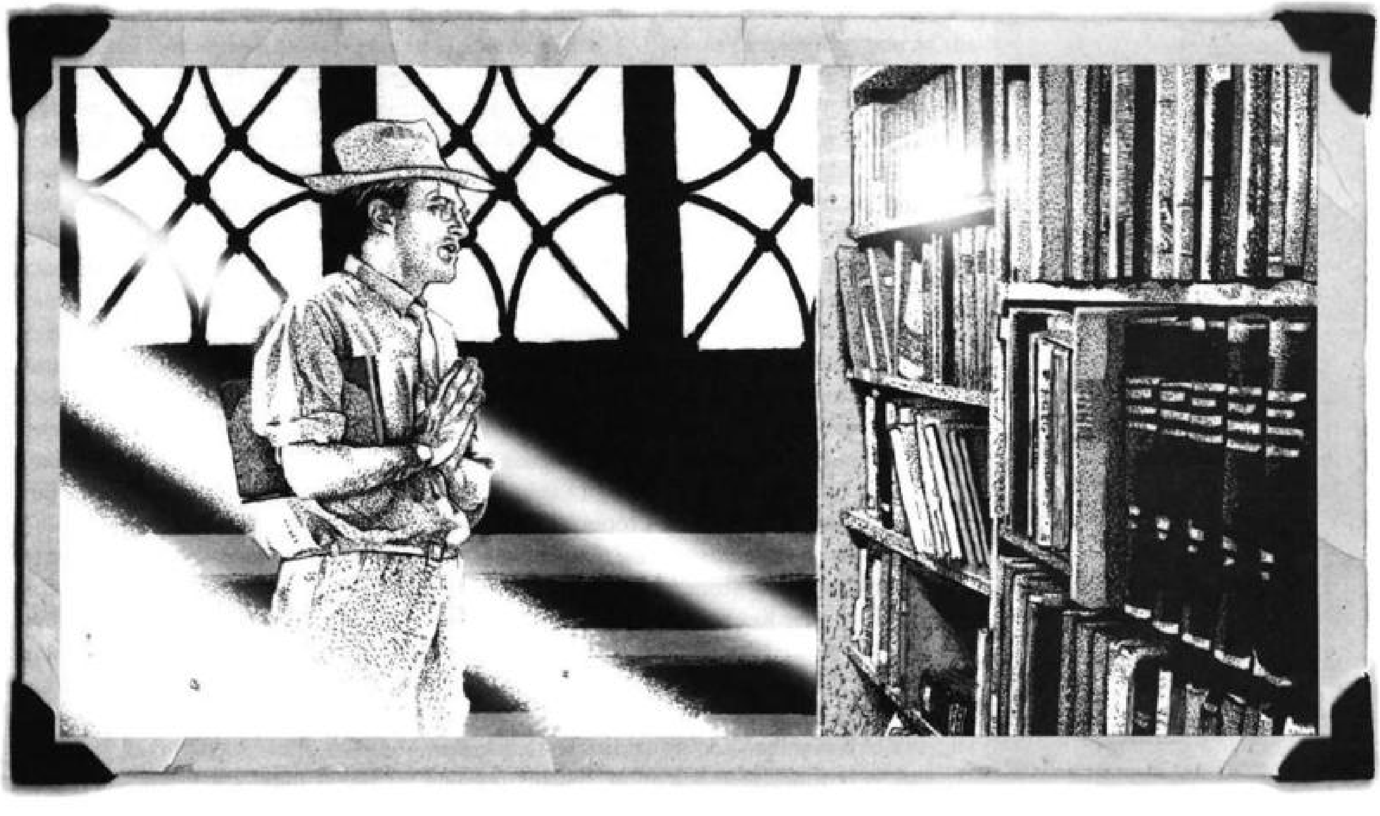
The Miskatonic expedition is providing a fresh opportunity. He arranged to be the liaison with the foreign archæologists in order to have some control over their activities. The ultimate goal is to have them discover the ancient city and assist in clearing it of his enemies. However, he has no actual plan to do this. Currently, he is bent only on ensuring most, if not all, of the Mayan diggers are members of his own people. The Miskatonic group will probably be only too glad to not have to deal with this hassle and thus will turn the recruiting issue over to him. In subsequent sections, the possible actions of Dr. Calderon at various points will be described. Both Calderon and his brother, Kukulcán, are described in the NPC section.

Encounters in Mérida

The investigators are likely to spend a period of up to several weeks in Mérida. While here, there are a number of situations that may arise. What follows is a sample listing of potential encounters and events in the city that can serve to confuse or distract the group. This is an ideal opportunity for the Keeper to introduce minor subplots of his or her own creation. Remember that this period in Mérida is simply a transitional one and getting the group bogged down in prolonged or numerous subplots will likely slow the pace of the scenario to a crawl. Probably a good guideline is to spring no more than one or two such encounters on the group who are, no doubt, eager to get into the wilderness.

#1: **The Occultist**

While visiting any one of Mérida's many interesting antique shops and bookstores (Peña's Antiques is provided later as an example), one or more of the investigators can observe an odd looking American rumaging through shelves in an almost urgent manner. Watching him for more than a moment reveals him to be an extremely pale and somewhat thin, middle age man dressed in pristine white trousers and long sleeve shirt with matching jacket, tie, and hat. He is sweating profusely and stops his



activities only momentarily to wipe his brow with a handkerchief. Thinking players may notice his very superficial resemblance to Quetzalcóatl (the so-called "white man") and thus may watch for him later. This is fine as long as they don't just assume he is nasty and take measures against him.

Whatever the reason for his search, it seems quite important to him. Tucked under his arm is a worn, plain, brown, leather-bound book. It is his newest acquisition and will be paid for prior to his departure. Entitled *Rites of the Maya*, it is described below. Under no circumstances will he relinquish this book. Close by is a bulging, jet black, leather briefcase which is buckled shut.

If approached, the man will seem tense and nervous and will only provide the bare minimum of pleasantries in order to get back to his work. If introductions are wheedled out of the man, he will admit his name is Morris Anthony and that, yes, he is an American.

Anthony is a red herring who should be ignored since there is no reason to mess with him. Furthermore, doing more than cursory checks is probably unwarranted. Investigators who assault him, steal from him, or break into his rented room are either unfit to be part of an archæological expedition or are being poorly roleplayed by their players.

Independantly wealthy, he is a "professional" occultist who searches the world for obscure knowledge. He has never seen anything paranormal though he would certainly like to. Right now, he is scouring Mérida booksellers for unusual literature and has met with some success. His bulging leather case contains the following:

(1) *People of the Toad* (1888) by Rufio Mendez. Only fifty copies of this 227 page book were produced at the author's expense. Written in Spanish, it is the author's personal account of his adventures deep in the Amazon basin in 1879. Though poorly written and dull, the content is fascinating to those who can see beyond repetitive sentences and inept grammar. It documents many tribes in the region and although chock full of innaccuracies, some information is of great value to those who know what to look for. Anyone successfully reading this who already has 40% or more in Occult will gain +1% Occult. Those with less knowledge will learn nothing since they will be unable to distinguish between errors and facts.

(2) *Azathoth and Other Horrors* (1919) by Edward Derby. Called *Azathoth and Others* in the *Call of Cthulhu* rulebook, the actual title of this book of poetry is *Azathoth and Other Horrors*. Its description may be found in the *CoC* rules and in *Chaosium's Keeper's Compendium*.

(3) *Rites of the Maya* (1910) by Eduardo Mondragon. This will be added to the briefcase after Morris purchases it. Written in Spanish, it is a study of modern Mayan religious practices, both non-Christian and Christian. As in many parts of the world, native beliefs have blended with imported Christianity and it is this which the book examines. It is well worn, but is a first edition copy (the second edition appeared in 1912). Only three hundred copies of each edition were printed by Montezuma Press of Mexico City. Successful readers gain +1% Occult. However, bona fide experts on Maya folklore or mythology (Keeper's discretion) will gain no bonus to Occult skill from this text.

Morris Anthony is totally harmless and inoffensive. His urgent bearing is simply a personality trait. He is always high strung and nervous and takes everything very seriously. This combined with his total lack of social skills makes him very distinct and noticable. Investigators following him will find he lives in a boarding house near the University campus. He has been there a few weeks and the landlord, Adolfo Muñoz, can say he has paid his rent through the end of August. If they go so far as to break into or otherwise enter Anthony's room, several more occult texts will be found along with personal papers and close to one thousand dollars worth of Mexican pesos, U.S. dollars, and British pounds. More on Anthony can be found in the NPC section.

The Keeper has an additional option here. If the Pagan Publishing campaign *Walker in the Wastes* is available, Anthony may be replaced by the villainous Reinhold Blair. This detestable individual would be searching the stores for much the same reason though his long term aims would be nefarious. He is totally unrelated to matters here, but could become an additional link to that campaign. How Blair is employed in Mérida is up to individual imagination, but his reasons for being there are largely the same as

Anthony's. He will take no action against the investigators unless provoked, but will be much less tolerant of snooping yahoos than would Anthony. (In playtesting, some of the players who had experienced *Walker in the Wastes* thought they were encountering Blair though this was not the case.)

#2: **The Gálvez Hacienda**

As the source for the valuable journal which is partly responsible for this expedition, the investigators will likely want to interview Señor Antonio Gálvez. If they neglect to, he will certainly be interested in having them to dinner, especially if his friend, Dr. Badowski, is present.

Gálvez is a successful henequen farmer who, like many others, is now a wealthy and prosperous land owner. While the henequen boom of the late 1800s has passed, he is still comfortable in the economic sense and is living out his retirement years in peace and solitude. However, he and his wife, Louisa, enjoy polite company. They will likely invite the leaders of the expedition, including Dr. Calderon, to dinner within a few days of their arrival in Mérida.

Dinner with the Gálvezes is a quiet, sedate occasion with polite conversation that will inevitably drift to the subject of archæology and Mayapán. Señor Gálvez will be most pleased to learn that his discovery of the journal was instrumental in getting Miskatonic the contract to excavate the site. If the investigators ask if they can search his storerooms for more such artifacts, he will say they are welcome to. However, he will explain that a few days previously, some nefarious individuals broke into his home in the early morning hours while it was still dark. Señor Gálvez knows of nothing that is missing, but as far as he can tell, only the storerooms were bothered. Valuable silver cutlery and fine antiques were ignored in nearby rooms so he is quite confused as to why someone would break a window, climb in, and pry open crates yet remove nothing.

This should catch the investigators' collective attention. If they have already encountered Morris Anthony, they may immediately suspect him of the crime even though he is totally innocent. They should consider that only a relative few people are aware of the Ramirez journal. The Mexican government, Miskatonic personnel, and the Carnegie Institution of Washington know of it, but that is about all. Señor Gálvez insists (if asked) that he mentioned it to no one but his wife and servants and his servants (if questioned) insist they spoke of the matter with no one. Similar denials will come from his wife. Lie detecting Psychology rolls will reveal that they are telling the truth.

What actually happened is that Dr. Calderon, knowing of the journal before the group even arrived here, arranged for a few of his cult members to break into the Gálvez home and search for more such material. They searched the two ground floor storerooms plus the attic before slipping away unnoticed. The crime was a one shot deal and they have no intention of repeating it. The investigators may logically presume that they were after something important.

If they ask to search the house, a concerned Antonio Gálvez will acquiesce. He will, however, insist that he be permitted to supervise. The only portion of the house he cannot reach is the attic and that is due to the frailty of his body. In the attic, the investigators are unsupervised.

When searching the storerooms, the group finds them to be a mess. While normally cluttered according to the servants, they weren't anywhere near this bad prior to the break-in. Most of what is in them has sat here for years. Among the long forgotten items are furniture, china, linens and clothes, and books. In fact, books are scattered everywhere. Searching through them takes the better part of an hour, but the result is failure. None seem to be relevant. Many subjects are covered including Mayan history and religion, but nothing that the group hasn't seen in libraries of North America and Europe.

The attic, if searched, is just as bad. Interestingly, Señor Gálvez was unaware it had been entered so will be quite surprised to find its contents have been disturbed. The scene in the attic is much like that in the storerooms. However, here can be found an interesting clue. A successful Spot Hidden roll at 75% of its normal chance will be rewarded with the discovery of a small, clay amulet. Measuring two inches in diameter, it apparently fell when the leather thong on which it was tied broke when it snagged on a protruding nail. The amulet bears a crude image of a plumed serpent that any qualified historian or archæologist knowledgeable on Mayan studies will recognize to be the symbol of the god Kukulcán (without having to attempt a skill roll; non-experts can try Occult or History skills). If this is brought to Señor Gálvez, he will not know what it is nor will he know how long it has been there. As the only Mayan artifact in the attic, it should attract notice. In truth, it was dropped by one of the Yig cultists, but some may theorize it was there all along and it is purely a coincidence it is there.

At this point, the group should be confused and perhaps a bit edgy. Throughout the rest of their stay in Mérida, they may go about investigating this mystery. It may consist of shadowing Morris Anthony or staking out the Gálvez hacienda. Questioning police is ineffectual; they have no clues or suspects and turning the amulet over to them will simply result in its loss through the cracks in the bureaucracy. More extreme measures are probably inappropriate at this time and all should keep in mind that they are here to excavate Mayapán, not get involved in affairs best left to the local authorities.

#3: **The Smuggler**

Tomás Rodriguez is a gun runner from northern Mexico who is selling arms to local Mayans. Recently, he illegally acquired four hundred World War I surplus rifles (U.S. manufactured Springfield M1903 .30-06 bolt-action rifles) as well as one hundred cases of .30-06 ammunition (1,000 rounds per case) from a source in the United States. He hopes to sell this entire lot to Mayans who have, in the past, been quite rebellious. There is currently little chance

that the Mayans will rise up against the Mexican government, but throwing these arms into the arena will do nothing to help stability. Rodriguez has this shipment stored in a Mérida warehouse. Everything has been repacked in innocent looking crates marked "BIBLES." Rodriguez thought repeating this little tactic used decades earlier in the U.S. by John Brown and his abolitionists was somehow humorous. He was successful in getting them to Mérida through the use of creative bribery and other chicanery and now is trying to arrange a move into the countryside. He is having trouble finding potential buyers and will likely have to break the allotment up in order to get rid of it.

Rodriguez may be encountered in any of several ways. He may be met in a Mérida nightspot and Mayan player characters may be approached in an attempt to sell them weapons. An encounter might not be pleasant, particularly if Rodriguez is under the influence of intoxicants or is somehow insulted. Personal slights are taken very seriously by him and he always packs a concealed knife at the very least. When he is sober, it is possible to reason with him, but if he is not, words will not work well. Outside Mérida, it is possible to encounter him, probably while he is transporting the weapons to some remote village. However, he will not be delivering them anywhere near Mayapán nor should these arms end up in the hands of the cults.

Calderon's Diggers

Carlos Calderon will actively lobby the expedition leadership, be it Dr. Badowski or the investigators, to be the one to recruit diggers for the expedition. He will claim that as a Mexican scholar with field experience, he is the best suited to perform this important, but mundane, task. If he is allowed to do so, he will definitely stack the deck in his favor.

When recruiting diggers, Calderon will draw most from his own Yig cult. Up to eight may be cultists. However, those who are cult members differ rather drastically from Maya who are residents of the area around Mérida.

First, all will speak Yucatec only. None will have any command of the Spanish language whatsoever and all are illiterate, even in their native tongue. Any who speak Yucatec fluently will detect an unusual accent when they speak. This accent cannot be identified or pinpointed to any particular region of the Yucatán Peninsula.

Second, anyone who pays any close attention to their behavior will see that their demeanor is not the bright and positive image normally portrayed by local Maya. They seem very serious and intense, but are in no way sinister or threatening. Some might conjecture that they are from isolated villages that have perhaps been victimized by bandits or the government.

Third, for those who watch them closely, all seem to have a general ignorance of higher technology. If they see flashlights, electric lamps, motor vehicles, or other technical developments of the last several decades or so, all will appear somewhat confused or amazed. Further, all seem to quietly try to subdue or cover up this amazement as if they don't want to appear ignorant. They are not surprised by firearms or similar technology, but do not know how to load, maintain, or shoot them.

Each digger when hired is garbed in simple cotton shirts and trousers which are typical of local inhabitants. Each carries a rather formidible knife, something along the lines of a bush knife, machete, or large hunting knife. In most cases, these blades appear to be new or nearly new. When arranging for them to join the group, Calderon had used clothing purchased for them. Those that lacked modern steel knifes or machetes had such arms provided to them at Calderon's expense. Calderon will arrange for this out of the sight of expedition members. Unusually paranoid or inquisitive investigators could potentially follow Calderon and see him purchase clothing and arms for diggers who, in theory, he has never met. This would certainly be suspicious, but Calderon could easily explain this as being part of the digger's compensation.

Note that not all of the diggers hired should be Calderon's flunkies. A minority would be hired locally to fill out the roster. He would have no control over them, but would take no steps to arm them or equip them out of his own pocket.

The Keeper should be careful in how Rodriguez is used. Ideally, the investigators will either avoid or ignore him or will turn him in to the authorities if they learn of his illegal activities. If the latter occurs, they will gain the favor of the state government for the duration of their stay in Yucatán state. Simply reporting him will result in his arrest and confiscation of the contraband cargo. More on Rodriguez is given in the NPC section. Note that Calderon lacks the funds to purchase arms for his followers nor is this a practical option. Not only would time be required to train them, but someone who knows about firearms would have to be contracted to work with them. Bringing in an outsider to perform such a service is not something the cult is willing to risk.

#4: **The Thief**

Seeing the "rich Europeans" is too much for young Pablo Cruz to endure. An orphan for the past several months, Pablo has lived on the streets of Mérida and survived mainly through petty theft. With the arrival of the Miskatonic team comes a new opportunity for him. He will plan his move to enrich himself and may strike in the first hours after the group debarks from the train. Any action he takes against the group will be fairly minor. It may involve picking the pockets of someone who seems less than observant. In fact, he has a natural talent for spotting people who aren't paying attention. If Pablo succeeds in a Spot Hidden or Idea roll (he may try both), he will be able to determine which investigator has the lowest Spot Hidden skill. More than likely, it is this person that he will target.

Even more profitable is a break-in at an unattended hotel room or the warehouse where the group's belongings are stored. In any case, he will attempt to abscond with as much as he thinks he can get away with (most highly prized are small, portable items of high value such as jewelry, handguns, and cash). If caught, Pablo will try some song and dance to worm his way out of being punished or turned over to the less-than-kind authorities. He is not interested in being adopted or joining the group. He simply wants to survive and, if possible, improve his situation marginally. He does not think in the long term; his life is a day to day existence. More on Pablo Cruz can be found in the NPC section.

#5: **The Professor**

The arrival of the Miskatonic team is a notable event in Mérida. Soon after they settle into their lodgings, they are approached by Professor Augustín Cárdenas of Universidad de Yucatán. He is a member of the history department and will ask any notable members of the team who are well versed in Spanish to serve as guest lecturers for several classes. Compensation for this is twenty dollars in Mexican pesos. If none of the investigators are qualified for this (a sad state of affairs for any group trying to accomplish anything positive in this scenario), he will at the very least be interested in chatting. Dr. Cárdenas is an intelligent, well educated, and cultured man from the country's upper classes. His specific area of expertise is North American history and he is well informed in the fields of archæology and anthropology. He is proud of the history of Mexico and is fascinated by Mayan and Aztec history. Not surprisingly, he is fully fluent in several languages: English, French, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish. No statistics for him are provided since his actual impact is likely to be minor and he poses no threat to the expedition.

If for whatever reason the investigators decline Dr. Cárdenas' request, there will be no problems or repercussions. However, those who decide to take him up on his offer will earn his gratitude as well as the twenty dollars. Better yet, he can be an important contact here later in the scenario and even in future scenarios set in Mexico. Lecturers have the opportunity to earn checks in Spanish and Persuade and any one of History, Archæology, and Anthropology if they perform all four lectures. Any less and they may not earn any skill checks here. If asked, Dr. Cárdenas will say that other foreign visitors have lectured including some of the personnel associated with the C.I.W. excavations at Chichén Itzá.

Peña's Antiques

Operated by Maria Edina Peña, wife of a successful henequen farmer, Peña's Antiques is one of many such shops scattered throughout Mérida. It specializes in old books and Señora Peña is known locally for her knowledge of rare, collectable literature. Investigators can easily learn of her shop from librarians and staff at the local university. They can even just stumble across it as they explore the city.

The front of the store is devoted mostly to furniture, china, brass and silver objects, and the like. The large rear room is devoted to books which are crammed onto overloaded shelves and tables. A small assortment of Mayan artifacts may be here, but most are minor pieces in indifferent condition. It is the book section that should command the investigators' attentions. While the room is bulging with volumes, it is reasonably well organized. Approximately 70% are in Spanish. The rest are in foreign languages with English being predominant. As the investigators peruse the shelves and tables, they can consult specific sections (General History, Classic Literature, Mayan History and Religion, Occult, General Fiction, and Mexican History are typical subject headings). In the Mayan section, much of the classic literature of the day is available including works by such names as Stephens, Thompson, and Morley. This shop can be a useful location for background research and the Keeper should feel free to introduce any appropriate sources here that may have been missed in previous research.

Deities

Four deities, two Mayan and two Aztec, are important to examine since they of direct or indirect relevance to the scenario.

Kukulcán and Quetzalcóatl

In "The Heretics," Kukulcán is the most important deity and is the scenario's focus. A comparatively late entry into Mayan religion, it is possible that Kukulcán was actually a great Toltec or Mayan leader who was eventually deified after seizing Chichén Itzá and founding Mayapán. Similar theories have been put forth concerning Quetzalcóatl, the Aztec counterpart to Kukulcán.

The ties between Kukulcán and Quetzalcóatl are obvious and Kukulcán appears simply to be the Mayan version of that great Aztec deity. In form they are similar. Each is portrayed alternatively as a plumed or feathered serpent and as a white man. Both have been theorized by scholars to have once been great leaders that were later deified by their followers. Both have been portrayed as being gods at the tops of their respective pantheons and each is seen as a great wind god. In fact, Quetzalcóatl's wind god aspect is given its own name. It is Ehécatl who is the god of wind that precedes the coming of rain. Quetzalcóatl and Kukulcán faced similar ends. In Quetzalcóatl's case, he was overwhelmed by evil sorcerers and forced to flee the Aztec world. Prior to his departure, he vowed to return. Kukulcán's departure is less tragic. After establishing the city of Mayapán, he ruled there for many years. Later, he decided to leave, but his final act was to erect a great structure off the coast of the Yucatán. He, too, left with a promise to return. No evidence of the offshore structure has been found and most consider it to be myth.

In the Lovecraftian stories, there is some confusion over exactly what Cthulhu Mythos entity truly represents Quetzalcóatl and, in turn, Kukulcán. Zealia Bishop is quite clear on this issue in the story "The Curse of Yig." The opinion put forth is that Quetzalcóatl is the Aztec interpretation for Yig. No supporting information is provided; all that is given is a mere assertion apparently based on the fact that Quetzalcóatl is symbolized by a plumed serpent. Brian Lumley's views are radically different. He equates Quetzalcóatl with Ithaqua in "Born of the Winds." Quetzalcóatl above all else was a powerful wind god and Lumley connects Ithaqua with several powerful wind deities from around the world. In the author's opinion, Lumley's views on the matter are much more firm. Equating Quetzalcóatl with Yig simply because of a symbol seems a bit hasty. In fact, the plumed serpent symbol is not, according to some sources, a representation of Quetzalcóatl himself. Rather, in some representations, the face of a man can be seen emerging from the jaws of the creature and it is the face which is the wind god, not the serpent. In the author's campaign Walker in the Wastes (Seattle, Washington: Pagan Publishing, 1994), the Lumley view is used as an essential element at the core of the storyline.

However, this is not to say that either Bishop or Lumley is somehow wrong or should be ignored and that is part of the ultimate purpose of this scenario. Who is to say exactly what Kukulcán is (or should be) in Lovecraftian lore? Each cult within this scenario has different views, just as the reader may have. These views have caused a kind of holy war between the two cults that has been raging for centuries. The Spanish conquest, the arrival of Mexican independence, and other events have only served as relatively minor annoyances or setbacks. Each cult is determined to obliterate the other and reign supreme over the Yucatán. More on this ugly prospect is given later.

Chac

An important rain god, Chac was called upon most frequently in the Yucatán where rainfall was less than in other Mayan areas. He is seen as a human with a long nose and curling fangs and wears a headdress consisting of a knotted band. Chac is also viewed as a group of four separate deities each representing the cardinal points. Chac Xib Chac (the Red Man) is the Chac of the East, Sac Xib Chac (the White Man) is the Chac of the North, Ek Xib Chac (the Black Man) is the Chac of the West, and Kan Xib Chac (the Yellow Man) is the Chac of the South. Chac, too, is associated with the wind. Some may think that Chac (or the Chacs) are ideally suited to represent Ithaqua. However, this is certainly not the case. It must be remembered that many religions, including the Mayan religion, have more than one and often many rain, weather, wind, and storm deities. Chac is viewed as a benevolent deity and is associated with creation and life. Ithaqua fits well with many of the world's wind and storm deities, but in general, they are deities that are malevolent or destructive. Furthermore, deities that have somehow fallen or had a reduction in power are ideally suited to be linked to Ithaqua who, himself, had his own imprisonment of sorts. Thus, in Mayan religion, only Kukulcán fits the bill.

Tlaloc

The Aztec version of the Mayan Chac, Tlaloc is the Aztec rain god. A benign and benevolent deity, he is associated with moisture and fertility. He is credited with causing trees and plants to bud and flower and ripen. Elaborate ceremonies were held to honor him and bring seasonal rains to the land. In these, children were sacrificed. Tlaloc was widely worshipped and honored among the Aztecs. In the Aztec pantheon, Quetzalcóatl (as wind) was most essential to life while Tlaloc (as water) was second. Both, however, were essential and the Aztecs were sure to give both deities their due recognition and devotion.

In appearance, Tlaloc is distinctive. His face was painted with black, liquid rubber incrusted with amaranth seeds. He wore a crown of heron feathers, a jacket made of a net symbolizing clouds, a green necklace, a braided red pendant, and foam sandals. Rattles were used by him to create thunder. Most notably, he has large circular eyes giving him the appearance of wearing goggles. Tlaloc cannot serve as a representation of Ithaqua for the same reasons as Chac. He never suffered a downfall and he was too benevolent to fit the Ithaqua mold.

Into the Wilderness

The expedition should not have to tarry in Mérida more than a few weeks, less if they feel they should hurry or are simply eager to get started. The one essential task, hiring diggers and purchasing supplies, will take a minimum of one week, giving some investigators an excuse to look around town and do something productive. As stated before, Calderon will likely take care of this and he will be reasonably swift. *Keeper's note: it is certainly permissible to abbreviate this scenario simply by having all diggers hired by Calderon before the expedition even arrives in the city. This limits any necessary stay in Mérida to only a couple days or so. Some Keeper's may decide that any prolonged period here is detrimental to the pacing of the scenario; others will find it helps to build suspense, add flavor, and provide useful clues and information. Note that in writing this, the author has assumed the group will spend at least some time (a week or more) in Mérida.*

At the end of this period, the group will pack up and set off toward Mayapán. A few of the Mayan diggers can lead them there and the trip is not particularly trying. Located twenty-five miles south-southeast of Mérida, the ruins take only two to three days to reach. If the investigators so wish, they may take a side trip to Chichén Itzá to visit the C.I.W. expedition there. Chichén Itzá is seventy-five miles from Mérida and sixty-two miles from Mayapán. Unless they are overly encumbered or out of shape, travellers with guides may march as much as much as fifteen to twenty miles in a single day, more if they are in a hurry. The nature of the vegetation combined with having to lug equipment and pack animals around makes travel slow. A side trip to Chichén Itzá can take place any time early in the scenario. Such a trip may very well be to compare structures at Mayapán to those in Chichén Itzá or could be merely a social call. Most likely, there will be little time for this.

On the way to Mayapán, the investigators can meet one person of note. Outside of the usual assortment of Maya, a Catholic missionary named Walter Plunkett lives alone in a hut reasonably close to Mayapán. He is virtually the only person (and certainly the only non-Mayan) living in the area of Mayapán. This should not come as a surprise. The land here is characterized by scrubby jungle and is poor for agriculture. Plunkett lives three miles from the city and knows more about it than anyone aside from the cultists. He is aware of strange occurrences at the Temple of Kukulcán, having found evidence of activity there. He has not understood the actual scope of activities. Plunkett is an excellent liaison with local Maya and has cultivated good relations with the people of the area over the past decade. If asked why he is living in so remote an area, he will simply reply that he is doing God's work in the wilderness, teaching the Maya Christianity, history, and Spanish. As the only person within a reasonable (if three miles is reasonable) walk of the ruins, Plunkett may become a suspect in the eyes of the investigators early on. This is far from the truth. He is a likeable and inoffensive man. More on him is in the NPC section.

PLAYER CHARACTER

KIRK H. CROSS, III

Huntsman, gambler, philanderer, geologist,
industrialist, tobacconist and tourist.

Died July 15th, 1925

"What the hell are you talking about!
— I ***am*** *speaking!"*

Mayapán

Mayapán is an overgrown heap of rubble. Little will be seen by the expedition when they first enter its environs. The defensive wall will be encountered and the Temple of Kukulcán is pretty obvious, but most everything else consists of vegetation-covered mounds. Nothing spectacular presents itself, unlike at the ruins of Chichén Itzá. Boxed information on Mayapán provides further background information.

Setting up camp is the first priority. The diggers will erect tents and over the next week will build Mayan style huts in order to provide additional living and storage space. While the diggers are busy with this, the Miskatonic personnel can begin examining the site and surveying it.

Not surprisingly, the investigators will probably gravitate almost immediately to the Temple of Kukulcán. Like everything else, it is covered with vegetation and requires a fair amount of work to clear before detailed examination can begin. Those expecting to find great things here will at first be very disappointed. An observatory like the Caracol at Chichén Itzá was rumored to be here and was documented by Stephens and Catherwood in the 1840s, but there is no sign of it. If it ever existed, it has long since collapsed and been covered by vegetation. One story states it collapsed in the 1860s after being struck by lightning. Expedition personnel already know of this and should not be surprised.

Early on, the Keeper should ask the players precisely what they intend to do here. What is their work priority? Are they going to be thorough and systematic? Are they going to concentrate on the urban center around the pyramid or just dig in random locations? In all likelihood, the pyramid will (should) be tackled in the initial stages.

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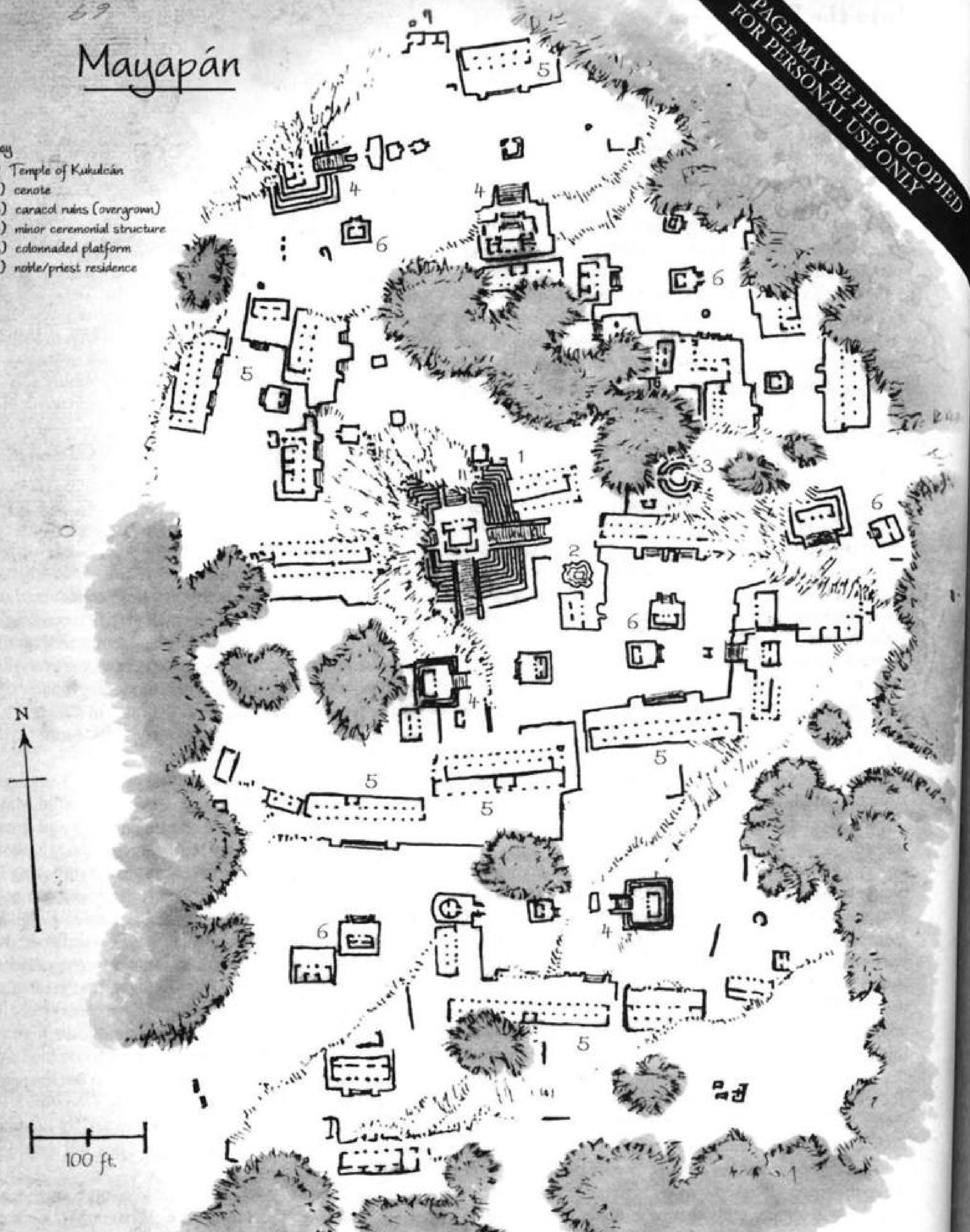
Mayapán

Key
1) Temple of Kukulcán
2) cenote
3) caracol ruins (overgrown)
4) minor ceremonial structure
5) colonnaded platform
6) noble/priest residence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Local Maya

The natives nearest the ruins are located in the general direction of Mérida and are perhaps three to three and a half miles away. They are extremely superstitious. Questioning them is easy. They are friendly and will welcome visitors. Plunkett's presence will enhance the group's image, but not having him around will not adversely affect their potential relationship with these people.

Some have visited the ruins either during their efforts at gathering firewood or simply out of curiosity. Most ignore them and see them as the bygone heritage of their ancestors. There are no bitter or dark rumors about Mayapán.

However, if someone is seeking to document local legends, among the many which can be learned is a singularly disturbing one. It is a tale of an unnamed howling wind demon that sweeps through the region every so often, carrying away those who are sinful. The superficial resemblance to the howling creature from Ramirez's journal should come to the notice of perceptive investigators.

The Temple of Kukulcán

Simply put, this is a disappointment. It is a relatively small structure with a heavy growth of vegetation and no temple building atop it. Investigators familiar with the Castillo in Chichén Itzá will soon notice similarities with it. Since the Castillo was also dedicated to Kukulcán,

Mayapán

Mayapán (which means "the standard of the Maya") was built by the Toltecs once they had conquered the Yucatán Peninsula. First establishing themselves in nearby Chichén Itzá, the Toltecs rebuilt that city which had been abandoned centuries before. Mayapán was built shortly thereafter and soon a league or confederacy of sorts rose with three cities at its core: Chichén Itzá, Mayapán, and Uxmal. Of the three, Chichén Itzá is best known to the layperson, especially because of its distinctive, round "astronomical observatory" known as the Caracol. At the time of this scenario, Sylvanus Morley and the Carnegie Institution of Washington were in their second season of excavating at this site and were intent on restoring monuments. Major features have already been revealed, including the Caracol, the famous ball court, the Temple of the Warriors, and the Castillo, also known as the Temple of Kukulcán.

Chichén Itzá's smaller cousin is Mayapán. Possessing only a single small pyramid known as the Temple of Kukulcán, it is an apparent attempt to copy Chichén Itzá's Castillo. The attempt is generally viewed by scholars as a failure. The workmanship is shoddy; in fact, shoddy workmanship is rampant throughout the city, which contains by some accounts approximately five thousand structures (the lowest estimate the author found was 3,600). There are no other pyramids within the city and there is not even a ball court, a feature considered important in Mayan life. There were minor shrines to other gods surrounding the pyramid, but in Mayapán, Kukulcán was dominant. Great numbers of incensarios (incense burners) have been found at the site and these gaudy pieces evidently had some religious significance. Mayapán does possess one element that is extremely rare in the Mayan world...a defensive perimeter wall. Five to six feet in height and twelve feet wide at the base, it is five miles long and encircles a great irregular oval encompassing an area of approximately 1.6 square miles (although the site exceeds two square miles in size with some ruins lying outside the wall). In its day, it would have presented a daunting barrier to invaders who would have averaged no more than five feet in height. The wall is broken by a dozen openings which served as gates to the city. The wall is stark evidence of the violence of the final centuries of ancient Mayan life. Within its protective confines were mostly residential structures plus a total of twenty cenotes. In fact, according to one source, Mayapán is the first Mayan residental city with other cities being more ceremonial than anything else. The ruins have never been substantially excavated. The urban center is marked by the pyramid which was partially restored in the 1950s. While the site was examined in the 1920s by Morley and others and some excavations took place, the main digs, led by the Carnegie Institution of Washington, occurred after the Second World War. Most estimates of its population are in the vicinity of ten thousand though Diego de Landa was led to believe the city housed a population of sixty thousand. In one way, Mayapán is very poorly situated. Its soil is very poor and agriculture was virtually a hopeless prospect. The city was dependent on imports and tribute from conquered states for its existence.

The confederacy of Chichén Itzá, Mayapán, and Uxmal was soon dominated by Mayapán and ultimately, Chichén Itzá was destroyed. Mayapán ended up being the last great centralized power in the Yucatán. However, warfare ended its existence by 1450 which is prior to the arrival of the Spaniards in the early sixteenth century. In fact, captive lords from Uxmal are alleged to have wrought the downfall of Mayapán. When the Spaniards arrived and began the conquest of the region, they found a scattering of sixteen or so squabbling states. It took three attempts to finally conquer the Yucatán and had the Mayans ever dropped their personal grudges against one another, they very well might have held off the European invaders. Even so, it wasn't until 1697 that the last Mayan stronghold fell.

Two final notes are important to mention here. First, recent studies have cast doubt on the theory that Chichén Itzá, Uxmal, and Mayapán were in a so-called League of Mayapán. It seems that Uxmal and perhaps even Chichén Itzá may have already been in ruins by the time Mayapán rose. However, no one can really say for sure what the political situation was at the time so the author has chosen to stick to this theory for the purposes of the storyline. Second, the author has equated the Toltecs with the Mayans although these are considered by most scholars to be two entirely different groups of people. The Toltecs were conquerers who brought in trappings of Mexican religion and culture and did their level best to subjugate the Mayan people. While the Toltecs were foreign invaders, they are similar enough to the Maya to fit in well with the storyline. Scholars of Mayan history and religion may grit their teeth in frustration at this, but this is intended to be a roleplaying scenario, not a scholarly work.

it is the first comparison that should be drawn. As will soon become evident in other structures throughout the city, this temple is a poor example of Mayan architecture. This may be a great blow to the morale of the archæologists in the group, some of whom probably hoped for much greater things. Of course, archæology isn't just finding glorious monuments to the greatness of ancient civilizations. Further, the general nature of the site was already well known to the group prior to their arrival so this shouldn't come as a surprise. Despite the less-than-glamorous nature of the ruins, Mayapán has many secrets that can be uncovered. Careful work will permit the expedition here to shed at least some light on Mayan history and culture.

Climbing to the top of the pyramid is relatively simple. Anyone attempting this need merely not fumble a Climb roll in order to reach the summit (a similar roll is required to descend). A fumbled roll indicates the poor buffoon fell and tumbled partway down the side, taking 1D6 damage if a Luck roll succeeds and 2D6 damage if a Luck roll fails. In any event, a successful Jump roll will reduce or even negate the damage from a fall (a successful Jump roll alleviates 1D6 damage).

The top of the pyramid is strangely clear. In fact, if someone checks and succeeds in a Spot Hidden roll, signs are found that indicate someone (or a group of people) have been to the top of the structure recently. The impression an observer might get is

Chichén Itzá

Chichén Itzá is a great ruined Mayan city in the northern Yucatán. It saw two rises. First built by the Maya between 600 and 900 A.D., many of its greatest structures are their handiwork. The city then fell into disuse and was abandoned. Later, the Toltecs arrived and occupied Chichén Itzá, making it their capital for a time. At approximately the same time, Mayapán was founded. The Toltecs during their occupation altered the city to suit their needs and completely renovated it. In revitalizing the city, the Toltecs used many existing structures rather than destroy them. Chichén Itzá soon outclassed the former Toltec capital, Tula. After two centuries, Chichén Itzá was once again abandoned (though Mayapán endured for a time longer). Evidence of its use as a holy site was found as late as the Spanish conquest though by that time, it had long since ceased being a city and had fallen into ruin. Mérida is seventy-five miles away from the site and investigators travelling there with pack animals can expect the trek to take three to four days barring unforeseen circumstances or hardships.

The city is characterized by a number of architectural and archæological wonders. The tallest structure is a seventy-five foot high pyramid called the Castillo. It is also known as the Temple of Kukulcán and was dedicated to that important deity. Though probably not known as of 1925, within the Castillo is a second smaller pyramid that was built over relatively early in its history. This is a trait not unusual in the pyramids of Mesoamerica. Old pyramids would be reworked by the natives by stripping the facing stone away and emplacing a new layer, making the structure larger. In the case of the Castillo, it is believed the inner pyramid dates back to the time of the initial occupation of the site by the Toltecs.

Adjacent to the Castillo is the Temple of the Warriors, a Toltec structure similar and superior to one that exists in the former Toltec capital of Tula. It consists of a large, four platform step pyramid atop which is a temple building. Approximately two hundred round and square columns flank the pyramid on its south and west sides. As with the Castillo, an earlier pyramid was found within the newer structure and the original was probably Mayan in origin. However, of all major structures within the city, the Temple of the Warriors is most Toltec.

The Caracol: perhaps one of the most famous and distinctive structures in the Mayan world. Consisting of a circular tower topped by a circular "observatory," it is also known as "the Snail" because of its unusual appearance. Atop the Caracol it is believed the Mayans conducted astronomical observations and calculations. It is also believed ritual sacrifices were conducted on the Caracol. This structure remains a source of mystery and debate since it is unclear how much of it is Mayan and how much was modified by the Toltecs.

Chichén Itzá also possesses the largest ball court in Mesoamerica. 450 feet in length, it possesses unusually high vertical sides and has a small temple at each end. It is considered a great artistic achievement and is the greatest of nine ball courts known to be in the city. By the end of the twentieth century, only this one has been restored. Ball courts were important in Mayan life and most cities possessed at least one. (Significantly, Mayapán has no ball court.) One of the three structures facing the ball court is the large Temple of the Jaguars. It is similar to the main temple in the city of Tula and contains one of the few remaining murals in Mesoamerica. Though it has been vandalized, enough remains to show a battle between besieging Toltec warriors and defending Mayan villagers.

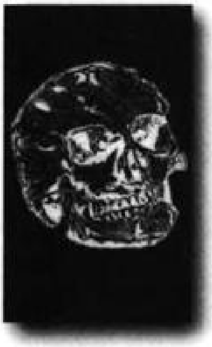
One other important feature is the cenote that was dredged by Edward Thompson at the turn of the century. A cenote is a kind of well found at most, if not all, Mayan sites. Essentially a sinkhole opening into underground streams or subterranean water deposits, cenotes are an important water source in the Yucatán. The most famous at Chichén Itzá is called the Well of Sacrifice and Thompson's dredging efforts were rewarded with objects of gold, copper, jade, shell, and pottery. These were not objects that were carelessly lost; they were intentionally sacrificed and in the process all were broken. Most of these objects have found their way into the Peabody Museum except for a handful that are in the Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City.

Near Chichén Itzá is a hacienda once owned (at the turn of the century) by the aforementioned Edward Thompson whose archæological exploits included dredging the Well of Sacrifice for treasure. His hacienda serves as a base of operations for the Carnegie Institution of Washington expedition at the time of the scenario. The C.I.W. is excavating and restoring the site and in real life were to do so from 1924 through 1940. Despite the massive effort made, most structures are still grass and weed covered mounds. However, the most significant buildings, such as the Castillo and the Caracol, have not only been uncovered, but were restored.

that the top has been cleared and kept clear of vegetation over a fairly prolonged period. A successful Track roll made by someone who is familiar with the Yucatán environment reveals that a group of perhaps a dozen people ascended the north face and may be responsible for clearing the top of vegetation. Sadly, none of the diggers provided in the NPC section has Track skill though the Keeper may opt to give this skill to one. Most likely, a PC investigator will have this skill. However, for it to be useful in this case, the person must either have travelled extensively in the Yucatán before or be from this region (perhaps a digger or explorer). The reason for this is the tracker must be familiar with local conditions including how fast vegetation grows (very fast).

This will likely remain a mystery for a time and be the cause of all sorts of speculation. Wise investigators will be cautious and establish a guard schedule during the nighttime hours.

The Temple of Kukulcán has one great secret and the group will (should) discover it. In fact, if they are particularly observant, they could discover it the first day. As they go to clear the pyramid of vegetation, a process that will take weeks, they will eventually, with the appropriate Spot Hidden rolls, find that a stone slab atop the structure is loose and can be moved. When lifted away, beneath is a one foot deep niche measuring approximately two feet by three feet. Within are two objects wrapped in gray, cotton cloth. The cloth appears reasonably new (it is) and is probably of native manufacture. It is the objects within the cloth that are more notable. The first is a life size and life like human skull that has been carved from a single piece of clear, solid, rock crystal. The second is a magnificently painted codex. Each is described below.



The Crystal Skull of Mayapán

Cursory examination of this skull reveals it to be a single piece of rock crystal that was carved and polished, perhaps over the course of centuries, into a very life like and anatomically correct human skull. It is life size and a successful Anthropology roll or 20% of a Medicine or Forensics roll will reveal that the model for it was most likely an actual Mayan skull, probably male. The only feature it seems to lack are suture marks. Note that to be allowed to even attempt the previous Anthropology roll requires the subject to be proficient and have at least a 40% rating in it. Archæologists and historians that are familiar with Mesoamerican history and religion may attempt Knowledge rolls. If successful, they remember that one other crystal skull is known to exist and is currently on exhibit in the British Museum in London. The origins of this skull are shrouded in mystery as well and some allegations are circulating that it is a hoax. As a side note, the famous crystal skull allegedly found by the Mitchell-Hedges expedition in Lubaantún, a ruined Mayan city in British Honduras (now called Belize), was not discovered until 1927. The Mayapán skull is therefore a remarkable find, probably the greatest single one in the city.

Those familiar with the British Museum skull will realize after a more in depth examination that this one is of far superior workmanship. In fact, it is similar in quality to the Mitchell-Hedges skull that has yet to be found (but unlike that one, this fictitious skull does not have a detachable jawbone). Weighing approximately twelve pounds, its purpose will be a mystery for the investigators for some time. More on its significance is given in the next section.

The Mayapán Codex

This codex is a tremendous find for the investigators. To date, only four legible codices have been discovered, the rest succumbing to neglect and Spanish bonfires. Of the remaining four, one is alleged by some scholars to be a fake. Obviously, to find a fifth codex is of paramount importance. Should it be proven to be genuine, it would be the greatest archæological discovery since the opening of Tutankhamun's tomb in 1922.

The four surviving codices are written on paper made from the inner bark of the fig tree. To make it, bark was pounded with grooved mallets and shaped into long sheets. These were coated with lime paint to make the surface smooth. The sheet was then folded. The longest existing codex, the Madrid Codex, is close to seven meters long. All codices that can be found in this scenario will conform to these general standards.

The Mayapán Codex is of recent manufacture, but the information within is genuine though the investigators have no way of confirming this. It is a religious text measuring four meters when unfolded fully. It contains many of the rites to Kukulcán (Ithaqua), but knowledge of ancient Mayan in 1925 is insufficient to be able to interpret much. The depictions of human sacrifices are pretty obvious, but most of the rest is incomprehensible. The codex is in immaculate shape, having been written a mere ten years ago and protected from the elements by caring devotees to Kukulcán. Prolonged study of the find will reveal this fact, but initially, the group should be excited by their discovery. Aside from the newness, the codex appears in all other ways to be perfectly genuine. The investigators will probably presume it is a fake until later events indicate otherwise.

The Mayapán Skull

The crystal skull hidden atop the Temple of Kukulcán is a vital icon of the Cult of Ithaqua in the Yucatán region. It is a source of veneration and worship and a tangible symbol of their god. In addition to its importance in rituals and ceremonies, it has a battery of powers and effects.

Physical Appearance

Physically, the skull was carved from a single piece of high quality rock crystal. A successful Geology roll reveals that such crystal cannot be found in the Yucatán. A person with adequate knowledge (a geologist or perhaps an archæologist) might know that such crystal was a trade item and was probably brought north from Brazil.

Rock crystal is an extremely hard substance. Though it is possible that the Mesoamerican peoples could have carved such a skull with their primitive tools, it would have required hundreds and perhaps even thousands of man-hours to carve and polish. Some observers might conclude that the item took decades or even centuries to complete.

Weighing just over thirteen pounds, it is an excellent, perhaps even exact representation of a human skull. It is approximately five inches high and six inches wide. Its length from front to back is approximately eight inches. A successful Anthropology roll reveals that the skull is that of a Mayan indicating that the model for the skull was probably an actual Mayan skull. It is anatomically perfect in virtually every way except that it lacks suture marks.

Powers

Aside from being an object of veneration and religious significance, the skull has a series of practical paranormal powers. These are:

1. *When used as part of a Call/Dismiss Ithaqua spell, all magic points and casting times are halved. Further, if the caster(s) have a 100% (or greater) chance of success with the spell, a fumbled roll will not result in failure, as would normally be the case, unless the roll is exactly 00.*
2. *The skull can serve as a battery for magic points. To charge the skull, one must use it in conjunction with a human sacrifice. At the end of the sacrifice, the victim's blood is placed in a large basin and the skull is immersed in it. The skull absorbs the blood at the rate of one pint per minute. For each complete pint absorbed, it gains one magic point. No more than twenty magic points can be stored within. To draw on these, the caster must be in physical contact with the skull (i.e. bare skin must be touching the crystal) when casting the spell in question. At the beginning of the scenario, the skull is fully charged. Note that an individual average sized adult human has approximately eight pints of blood in his or her body so to fully charge the skull would require at least three killings.*
3. *If used in conjunction with the skill Crystalomancy, the user has his or her chance of success doubled. Visions are seen through the skull's eyes. Crystalomancy is divination through the use of transparent or reflective objects and is fully defined on page 161.*
4. *Anyone who actively uses or exploits the powers of the skull is slowly corrupted. Each time it is used, 1D10 SAN is lost. The Keeper should keep track of this loss and not inform the player. It is kept track separately from all other SAN loss. If at any time the character's current SAN minus this secret SAN loss reaches zero or less, that individual becomes a devoted follower and worshipper or Ithaqua.*

   The skull bequeaths information via visions to the new devotée. If the victim has a POW rating of 15 or greater, he or she qualifies to be an acolyte (low ranking priest). Those with less POW can only be rank and file worshippers. The skull at this point controls the investigator. In all likelihood, that person slips away at first opportunity to join the nearest Ithaqua cult or perhaps attempt to start his or her own. Note that an acolyte can initially learn a few spells from the skull and gain general guidance and tutelage in the important aspects of Ithaqua worship (spells learned might include Call/Dismiss Ithaqua, Chill of the Wendigo, and Clutch of Nyogtha). These traditions will all be in the Mayan or Mesoamerican mold as opposed to being European, Asian, or North American. Spells learned may or may not be specifically Mayan, at the Keeper's discretion.

Effects

The skull has a number of side-effects, most of which are intangible. These are:

1. *Those in the immediate presence of the skull (within ten feet) who succeed in a POWx5 roll have the unusual feeling of being thirsty, even if they have had plenty to drink. The sensation is uncomfortable, but not overwhelming.*
2. *On occasion, poltergeist activity occurs in the presence of the skull. Objects near the skull (i.e. in the same room or area and within thirty feet) may move or change position when no one is looking. The effect is completely noiseless. Only small to medium size objects are affected (for example, chairs, books, drinking glasses, and picture frames might be moved, but not sofas, desks, or automobiles). The activity is uncommon, unpredictable, and intermittent and occurs only at the Keeper's discretion. Movement commences only when no one (including cameras and other monitoring devices) is looking. Therefore, while no one will see a candlestick begin to slide across a table, people may witness the movement after it has started. SAN loss for witnessing the results of this activity is 0/1D2.*
3. *When photographed, a faint aura can sometimes be detected around the object. The intensity of the aura depends on the number of magic points stored within the skull. A very faint aura means the skull has few or no magic points within. A more intense one means it is fully or nearly fully charged. There is no SAN loss for viewing photos containing the aura.*

The Mayapán Skull (cont)

4. *When photographed, it is possible that non-physical, spiritual entities in the vicinity of the skull may appear on the film or photographic plate (at the Keeper's discretion). These will be faint and hazy figures that will appear much like some of the classic images of spirit photography. Ghosts and similar entities are often attracted to the skull. Critics of spirit photography can probably find ways to debunk or discredit these photos even though they are legitimate. SAN loss for viewing photos of spirits costs no SAN or (optionally) 0/1.*
5. *Those who listen intently to the skull may hear sounds emanating from it. This requires the listener to succeed in a POWx1 roll and to be in a quiet area. The sounds are on the psychic level and cannot be recorded. In most cases, singing or chanting is heard. Those familiar with Yucatec will realize that it is some variant of that language (it is actually ancient Mayan). The sound is too faint to be actually understood. Hearing this causes the loss of 0/1D2 SAN.*

In the event this codex were ever translated, the reader loses 1D2/1D8 SAN after studying it for one full month. A successful Read English (or whatever other language it is translated into) roll is rewarded with +2% Occult and +5% Cthulhu Mythos. It contains the following spells: Chill of the Wendigo, Contact Minion of Ithaqua, Wrack, Call/Dismiss Ithaqua, Clutch of Nyogtha. In its original language, it provides the reader with +3% Occult and +8% Cthulhu Mythos. The significance of this find is detailed in the next section.

Note that if the codex is examined under controlled laboratory conditions, even with 1920s technology it can be ascertained that it is of modern manufacture. Though the materials and techniques used conform to Mayan standards, the codex is in too new of condition to be a vintage piece. With this known, no bona fide scholar would accept it as being anything other than a hoax or fake.

Calderon in Mayapán

While in or near Mayapán, Calderon will be his usual helpful self. Those Mayan diggers who are members of his cult will be well mannered and do everything they are told to do. Calderon, like other members of the Yig cult, knows naught of the secrets of the pyramid so he will be just as surprised as the investigators when the skull and codex are found. He will, in fact, be particularly elated, but not for the reasons the investigators are. By taking control of these items, he knows that a great blow is being dealt to the hated Cult of Ithaqua. He also knows that the enemy cult is watching the city and will likely be provoked into an attack when it becomes evident the Miskatonic team has their beloved treasures. With this knowledge, he will quietly inform the Yig cultists in the expedition to prepare for a fight. Such preparations will be extremely subtle. All that would be noticed, and this only by someone who knows what to watch for, is that the diggers are a bit more watchful and always have a decent weapon (pickaxe, machete, knife, etc.) within easy reach. There should be little chance to notice this since none of the investigators should (1) know what to watch for and (2) be suspicious.

In the event the investigators fail to establish guard shifts, the cultists among them will take measures to ensure the security of the camp. Thus, when the inevitable assault occurs, they will react swiftly and efficiently. This does not necessarily mean the investigators are safe, however. The cultist diggers will be fighting for their own lives and may not be able to warn or defend sleeping or surprised player characters. If the group failed to establish a guard shift, some non-cultists may very well be butchered in their sleep or trussed up and hauled away to the lost city.

Significance

Mayapán is the most sacred site for both cults of Kukulcán. Several pilgrimages are made each year and

Crystalomancy

Also known as crystal-gazing, this is where the diviner employs a transparent object as the primary component in his or her craft. This object may be a crystal globe, mirror, or even a pool of water. The diviner uses a form of hypnosis to see images and visions in the crystal. In the twentieth century, the most common form of crystalomancy involves the use of a crystal ball, one that must be a highly polished and flawless sphere.

Crystalomancy has been previously presented in Coming Full Circle (Seattle, Washington: Pagan Publishing, 1995) and Delta Green: Countdown (Seattle, Washington: Pagan Publishing, 1999) as an optional skill. It is a form of divination that has no specific use in this volume. The definition is provided for completeness since it pertains to the Mayapán Skull.

rites are held on certain special dates. Neither cult shares the same ritual dates so there is no chance they will arrive in the city at the same time. However, it is not unusual for one cult to ambush the other as they travel to or from the site. Cult versus cult combat in close proximity to the pyramid is taboo so religious activity, including sacrifices, is rarely interrupted. In fact, combat within the area bounded by the perimeter wall is virtually unheard of and only the seizure of the artifacts will provoke an attack.

Both cults maintain a fairly close watch upon the city. When outsiders explore it, reports are sent back to respective cult leaders. Occasionally, intruders are kidnapped and killed, but generally they are left alone. So far, explorers have done nothing to the site. There have been no real excavations and the city has not been desecrated, at least by the standards of the cults.

The investigators are the first expedition to arrive in Mayapán with the express purpose to excavate the ruins. Both cults consider this to be the ultimate sacrilege though the Yig cult will tolerate the intrusion because of Calderon's plan. However, it is only a matter of time before the Ithaqua cult intervenes in a violent manner.

Significance of the Artifacts

The Crystal Skull is housed in the niche atop the pyramid simply because it is believed by the Cult of Ithaqua that (1) it may lose its power if taken from the city and (2) Kukulcán may be most displeased if the object is not kept at his sacred temple. It serves as a major religious icon and is revered as being the handiwork of Kukulcán himself. Seizing this artifact would be like stealing major religious artifacts from the Vatican.

Unlike the Crystal Skull, the codex is not a religious icon. It is nonetheless important for it contains a transcript of all of the greatest and most important rites of the Cult of Ithaqua. In the eyes of the Ithaqua worshippers, it must remain in place and is one of only a small number of copies maintained by the priesthood.

Yig worshippers are unaware of the presence of these artifacts. Though this may seem unusual, there are good reasons for this. The first is that it is taboo for both cults to make physical changes to the pyramid. The cult of Yig, therefore, has no reason to be uprooting stone slabs that have been in place seemingly for centuries. Another is that the skull has been housed in the secret niche atop the pyramid for centuries and it is rather cunningly hidden. It is only because the archæologists are here with the express purpose of digging that they stumble across the skull and codex.

Under normal circumstances, it would be unlikely for the Yig cultists to molest them were they found. Despite the disagreement over Kukulcán, they do fear the power and wrath of the entity their enemies honor and worship. This concern is with very good reason despite the protection they feel they get from Yig. The current situation is a rather unique one and is moving the Yig cult to extremes they might not normally consider. Gaining and maintaining control over the artifacts obviously would place the Yig cult in a unique position of power over their adversaries. Where Calderon sees an advantage is that it is the expedition, not his brethren, that is taking the risk. Any wrath that might come down from Ithaqua because of this would affect the investigators exclusively. Calderon may even encourage the Miskatonic team to take the items if only to deny them to his enemies. He knows this could result in grave repercussions, but is willing to place his life on the line in order to facilitate the downfall of the enemy. As a side note, there is no mystical or supernatural penalty for handling or removing the items though Calderon does not know this.

Reprisals

As long as the investigators delay excavating the site and avoid molesting the artifacts hidden atop the pyramid, they will be only watched by the two cults. However, reprisals are almost guaranteed if significant excavations commence. Either cult may

The Cults of Kukulcán

Two cults in this scenario are devoted to the Mayan deity Kukulcán. Each worships a different interpretation of the deity and each is opposed to the other. Both are opposed to outsiders and while they will never cooperate, even to combat Mexican, European, or American "invaders," they may suspend hostilities for a time in order to deal with more immediate threats.

The Cult of Ithaqua

One cult worships the wind aspect of Kukulcán which, in this case, is Ithaqua. It is this cult which has always been dominant and has the upper hand at the time of this scenario.

Based in the "lost city" of Hiuhepetl, the cult has maintained a stronghold there for centuries. Its remote location and inhospitable terrain have kept them isolated from the outside world since the Spanish conquest. They are not totally ignorant of world events for they do have limited contact with Mayan farmers and the like. In general, they are aware of the Mexican government and are vaguely aware of the larger world outside of Mexico. They know what firearms are and have seen a few of the trappings of the modern world, but have no desire for such things. They are completely and totally devoted to Kukulcán and are happy to continue the traditions and lifestyles of their forefathers. Their primary mission is to eradicate the heretics worshipping Yig and to maintain the secret of their existence.

The high priest of the Ithaqua cult is titled "Kukulcán" after their god, but is not considered to be a god himself. Rather, he is the highest representative of their god on Earth. He possesses the greatest powers and greatest secrets of the cult and is replaced only upon his death. Life expectancies here are not particularly long, even among the aristocracy, so it is rare to see a high priest hold his position for more than a decade or so.

The two cults have been at odds for literally centuries. They represent in many ways the Maya as they were just prior to the Spanish conquest of the region in the 1500s. Not only do they fight amongst themselves, but they share many of the same cultural traits as their ancestors.

The Cult of Ithaqua is most like the ancient Maya. Substantial sections of the city of Hiuhepetl have been maintained, particularly the central district which contains the most striking monuments. Originally, Hiuhepetl covered close to five square miles, but most of this has long since been absorbed by the rain forest, much like other Mayan cities. In fact, the city was abandoned prior to the Spanish conquest, but was reoccupied and partly restored by Kukulcán worshippers fleeing the Spaniards. What has been preserved by the cult is simply magnificent. The city is further described later.

Aside from the city, the cult is organized into a kind of aristocracy with a handful of leading families running the affairs of the people. The average citizen in the population of over one thousand is poor, but not destitute. Water is never a problem for the city has ample numbers of cenotes. Food is a constant concern, however. Like Mayapán, the soil is poor for agriculture. The cult has taken to raiding the Yig worshippers for food and slaves. Sadly, slaves often end up as human sacrifices and then as food. Cannibalism is all too common among these cultists.

Materially speaking, the Cult of Ithaqua is quite rich. They manufacture codices on a regular basis and maintain a large library under the auspices of the high priest and his acolytes. Metal working is limited so weapons are generally made out of stone, bone, and wood. Typical arms are wooden swords with razor sharp obsidian blades embedded within them. Stone axes, stone tipped spears with atlatls (an atlatl is a simple spear thrower that is quite lethal in the hands of a person well versed in its proper use), and bows are common as are flint and obsidian daggers. Bows are typically made of hardwood with a henequen cord serving as string. Arrows are tipped with flint points. Interestingly enough, they even manufacture functional cotton armor like that used by their ancient ancestors. Such armor protects the torso only and provides one to two points of armor protection, depending on the thickness of the material and quality of workmanship. Pottery is quite good and often decorated with intricate designs and Mayan glyphs. Jewelry is common, even among the poorest of the poor. Jade is highly prized and limited to the wealthy only, but small pieces made of low grade gold (gold with a high copper content) are not an uncommon sight. Observers will note little evidence of modern influence. A few modern iron and steel tools are in evidence and these are highly prized. There are absolutely no firearms and if any were acquired, the inhabitants would have no idea how to make them function.

Life within the cult revolves around the worship of Kukulcán/Ithaqua. Sacrifices occur on a daily basis and results in the deaths of over five hundred people annually. This is a frightening figure for a people with only one thousand citizens, but the birth rate is quite high. Sacrifices are very often children and even infants from poor families. When available, prisoners and slaves are placed on the altar block and sacrificed to Kukulcán. Forays for sacrificial victims occasionally range out into the "outside world" and some of the Yucatán's many Mayan farmers as well as Mexican government officials and foreign travellers have ended up in their clutches. The depredations of this cult have gone largely unnoticed or ignored by the government. When things get a bit out of hand, the government has usually dismissed evidence of their activity as being the result of bandit activity or Mayan separatists.

The high priest rules with an iron hand. His word is the word of Kukulcán and thus is law. If he asks a follower to hurl him/herself into a pit full of venomous snakes, few would hesitate. To die in the service of Kukulcán is seen by most cultists as a sure ticket to "heaven." So strong is this belief that some people actually volunteer to be sacrificed.

The Cult of Yig

Worshippers of a serpent aspect of Kukulcán, this cult is smaller and weaker than the Ithaqua cult and lives a semi-nomadic existence in the rain forests surrounding the city of Hiuhepetl. They have similar objectives as their opponents within the city. They

The Cults of Kukulcán (cont)

wish to wipe out the heretical wind worshippers and seize their ancestral city for the greater glory of their god. Furthermore, they are equally adamant about remaining isolated and not being known to outsiders. The presence of the violent Yig cult in the vicinity of Xiuhepetl has actually helped insulate that city from the outside world.

One aspect of this religion is shared by their heretical counterparts. The high priest of this cult is also titled "Kukulcán" and gives up his birth name upon achieving this new rank. Unlike the wind cult, the leader of this one functions both as a religious leader and military general. Not surprisingly, they go through more high priests since it is not unusual for one to be killed in combat. Whereas the Kukulcán of the Ithaqua worshippers rules from on high, the Kukulcán of the Yig cult is a fighting general that leads from the front, not from the rear.

The people of this cult are almost universally poor. They live off slash and burn agriculture much like the Maya elsewhere in the Yucatán. Thus, they are constantly on the move. This is not just because of the type of agriculture they practice. They are constantly being assaulted by their counterparts in the Ithaqua cult. However, they do know how to dish out punishment. They are constantly raiding their enemies for materials and prisoners, not to mention as reprisals. The Yig cult numbers a mere two to three hundred.

Arms for these folk are even poorer than their enemies. Stone tipped spears and atlatls are about as good as it gets. Bows are also employed and for hand to hand fighting, stone axes and knives are used. They have no form of armor nor do they use the vicious obsidian bladed swords except for the few they capture in combat. Despite this, they are tenacious and determined fighters, a fact proven by their stubborn resistance for the past four centuries.

take action, but the Yig cult will not (should not) since Calderon is present and has a long term plot going. Most likely, it is the Cult of Ithaqua that will act. Not knowing of the plans of the Yig cult and being totally unaware of Calderon's very existence, they may stumble in and help prod Calderon's plan along. They will act very swiftly if they learn the Crystal Skull or Codex of Mayapán are discovered, disturbed, or removed. It is this which Calderon is waiting for.

The Cult of Yig is in a unique position. In all likelihood, it will not act against the expedition. However, if Calderon has for some inexplicable reason been ejected from the expedition, they may act in a manner similar to their enemies.

The Keeper must make an early determination as to when or even if a cult will attack, why the attack is taking place, how the expedition's size will affect the cult's tactics, and what effects defensive precautions (if any were taken) will have. When arranging for an assault, the Keeper must keep in mind the poor arms of the cultists and how much firepower the expedition possesses.

Most likely, an attack will occur at night with the Ithaqua cultists taking full advantage of the terrain, lighting conditions, superior numbers, and surprise. The latter, however, is something they will not have since Calderon is aware of them and will have warned Yig cultists in the expedition. Nevertheless, the attack should be quite devastating. Casualties can be quite high though the Keeper should probably keep player character losses to zero unless some are foolhardy. Those who rush blindly away could be captured rather than killed. They would be hauled off as prisoners for sacrifice later at the lost city. If the Keeper chooses to permit the cult of Ithaqua to capture sleeping expedition members, it may be advisable to make them NPC members as opposed to player characters.

In the aftermath of an attack, several things should become painfully obvious. First, the expedition was attacked by a large force of Mayans armed in a most primitive fashion. Not one firearm was in the hands of the attackers and this fact alone should be cause for concern and debate. Second, why the attack occurred should be discussed since there was no obvious provocation. In fact, the absolute lack of Mayans in the immediate area should cause great confusion among the player characters. Third, the admirable way the Mayan diggers (those that are Yig cultists) fought during the attack should have the player characters feeling very proud of both them and the man who hired them, Dr. Calderon. Fourth, the fact that some investigators or their NPC companions are missing (should this occur) may be most disturbing. Some may argue they were kidnapped (the truth) while others may insist they were part of the attack. Fifth and finally, the bodies of the Mayan attackers killed in the fight will not be recovered by their comrades. This will give the group an opportunity to examine them and confirm they are Mayan (possibly requiring an Anthropology roll). Their arms and equipment will also be cause for debate since it is in the traditional ancient style not normally seen outside a museum.

By morning (if they wait that long), the investigators will have some important issues to deal with. The Keeper's job at this point is to subtly steer the group toward the lost city. Motivating the group to start out after the fleeing Mayan raiders may be a problem, however. Many may argue that they should retreat to Mérida or contact the authorities. Others may be satisfied with fortifying the excavation site and continue on with business as usual. Still others may simply want to leave the country.

Leads and Motivations

There are a few things that should serve to motivate the investigators to action. First, bringing in the authorities will almost certainly result in the revocation of Miskatonic's contract. While they may have done nothing wrong or illegal,

The Modern Maya

The Maya at the time of this scenario have been examined and studied quite extensively, but much is still not known about them. In the state of Yucatán in which this scenario takes place, Mayans speak Yucatec, but there are other Mayan tongues used outside the region. Yucatec is in the Maya proper group of the Proto-Guatemala-Yucatán language family and the closest related language is Lacandon. Unlike Yucatec, Lacandon is spoken by only a few hundred natives.

The Maya have long been resistant to the incursion of the Spaniards and later the Mexican government. Violent resistance is not uncommon and twice in the nineteenth century, full blown warfare broke out. At the time of this scenario, such resistance is still going on in a sporadic manner and it isn't until after the Second World War that the situation begins to calm noticeably. Mayan resistance is such that outside of large cities, Mayan languages are still in daily usage for all matters and Spanish is only a second language. Investigators traveling in the Yucatán Peninsula will find that knowledge of Yucatec is vital outside of Mérida.

Physically, the Maya differ greatly from the norms of the United States and Europe. In stature, they are smaller with males averaging just under 5' 1" in height and females averaging just over 4' 8" in height. Weights are correspondingly lower (men average 116.3 pounds; women average 110.0 pounds). Maya are relatively thick bodied with rather long arms and small hands and feet. They are broad headed and dental decay prior to adulthood is uncommon. Even their pulse rate is different. For the average Maya, the pulse rate is 52 while for the average American of European or African descent, the pulse rate is 72. Their skin is copper-brown in color and they have black to dark brown, straight, coarse hair. Facial hair, aside from the occasional thin moustache, is nonexistent.

Sadly, the infant mortality rate is high for the Maya with seventy percent of children dying before the age of five. Not surprisingly, the birth rate is also high. The average age for adults at the time of death is 38.5 years. Early Maya were, like most Native American groups, decimated by diseases imported from Europe against which they had no immunity. By the time of this scenario, however, such immunity exists, but disease nevertheless wages constant war on the people. Fortunately, the Maya are almost fanatical about personal hygiene. Daily baths are routine and it is not unusual for two baths to be taken in a single day. Personal quarters and housing, however, do not get the same attention and while they are cleaned, usually by the wife, many households often see neglect. Trash can sit outside for literally years and this certainly does not help prevent disease.

While the Maya are stoical about personal pain and generally ignore it when they see it in others (a trait that has caused some observers to mistakenly believe they are cruel), they are a happy and sociable people. According to Sylvanus Morley in his book The Ancient Maya, they are good natured, trusting, and unselfish. The idea of charity is foreign to them and they refuse to accept it, preferring to pay for goods or services received. They are courteous and respectful to strangers and will happily give aid where appropriate. Interestingly enough, they are also pronounced individualists, a trait that is even harbored by children and respected in them by adults, including parents.

The Maya also have a strong sense of justice and assign great respect to the law. While not quarrelsome, if a Maya perceives he or she has been wronged, resentment is often harbored. As a people, the Maya are unusually honest with petty thievery being virtually unknown. Houses are not locked, even at night. They are not particularly religious, but are fatalistic and superstitious with many superstitions being quite convoluted by American or European standards. Overall, the Maya are a bright, imaginative, and intelligent people who are content to live their lives at peace with each other and the world (as long as others do not try to insert their culture on them).

The Maya generally live through subsistence agriculture and manual labor. Agriculture is typically the slash-and-burn type. This is the same method practiced by their ancient ancestors and the only type of agriculture that can be conducted in the rain forests of the Yucatán without exhausting the soil and destroying the forest. This is no simple way of farming. Specific sites must be chosen and a typical sites cannot be farmed for more than two years. In the Yucatán, a site is slow to recover and it takes ten to fifteen years to recover before it can once again be farmed.

the government would probably interpret the attack as being the cause of the outsiders who obviously cannot be tolerated by "temperamental natives." Stirring up the Mayans who have been shockingly violent in the past will not please the government in Mérida or Mexico City. Since they are sensitive to native uprisings, the group should understand that their position in the country after such an incident is precarious at best. This fact should be excellent reason to continue on in a swift and decisive manner while there is still time to make discoveries. If none of the player characters suggest this, then Calderon and/or Badowski (if he is used) certainly will.

Oddly enough, Calderon will appear to be sympathetic to the group's plight even though he is supposed to be safeguarding the government's interests. This may seem odd to perceptive investigators (it is odd; Calderon's true allegiance is to the cult, not the government) and if they question Calderon about his attitude, he will insist that he knows the group isn't responsible and that the expedition can still do good work. He will also claim to know nothing about the attackers and will insist that they must be part of some remote band that is still in rebellion against the government. He may even imply that to locate or destroy this rebellious group could result in a reward being given to the expedition by the government. Any successful Psychology roll made on Calderon at this point reveals that something is not quite right about his story or how he presents it. He may be lying or may be withholding some key information. Little does the group know, but he is indeed lying.

If this is not enough, the Keeper has more options to exercise. One is to give more clearcut leads to the secret city. Perhaps an attempt to recover the skull and codex is not enough motiviation (if they were recovered by the cultists), but combining this with the possibility of further great discoveries may prompt the investigators to continue on. Of course, the greatest tool the Keeper has is to cause the investigators to have to mount a rescue mission to recover captured comrades. Under no circumstances should the Keeper arrange or engineer a capture as part of the plotline. This is a quick way to infuriate players. However, if someone falls into the hands of the cultists in the logical progression of events, they will be borne away as candidates for sacrifice at the appropriate time and place. If engineering a capture seems to be the only way to continue the flow of the scenario, a visiting Walter Plunkett or some other NPC is an appropriate candidate. Dr. Calderon should not be captured or killed in the attack since he is needed later as part of the plotline.

Yet another possibility is for someone to remember the passages describing the lost city in Ramirez's journal. Combining this with the encounter with primitive Mayans may have someone come up with the bright idea that perhaps some Mayans are out there that have remained undiscovered all this time. After all, the Yucatán is a wild and poorly explored region and it is certainly within the realm of possibility that such a group still remains isolated there. Another possibility is they are modern Maya seeking to reclaim old ways and old heritage. Again, migrating into the wilderness and remaining undetected is a relatively simple matter at this time.

PLAYER CHARACTER

STAN "THE BELLY" KELLHER

Pinkerton Man, pugilist, and
Federale expeditionary security authority

Died July 18th, 1925

"Nobody move! Yer all under arrest!"

All sorts of leads can be acquired by the investigators in the immediate aftermath of a cult attack on their camp. If the investigators drive off a cult attack (they should be able to), they may be able to follow the retreating enemy into the scrubby rain forest. Since the cultists are probably in disarray, they may not notice pursuers who are stealthy and cautious. Of course, in the time immediately following an attack, the investigators may not be eager to chase an enemy who is obviously native to the environment. With luck and a decent tracker, however, they may be able to take up pursuit a day or more after an attack has occurred. Following them should meet with success barring an unusually long spate of blown die rolls since the trail is easy for a qualified tracker to follow.

There are more leads than these, but at best, they are tenuous. Inigo Ramirez's journal explicitly states there is a city deep in the rain forest, one that none of the "experts" among the investigators recognizes. If they attach any legitimacy to the Ramirez journal, they may already be on the lookout for something new. A study of the codex recovered from the top of the Temple of Kukulcán can prove useful. If examined thoroughly by someone well versed in the ancient Mayan language (possesses 60% or more skill), then some information may be gleaned from it with a successful Read Ancient Mayan skill roll. Remember, the knowledge of that language in the 1920s was poor so even a scholar with 80% or more in it cannot obtain much from a document. However, with a successful skill roll, a reader can make out certain bits of information outside of the already well known mathematical computations. Symbols representing Mayapán, Chichén Itzá, and Uxmal can be found and among these is a symbol for a fourth, unknown city. How it is pronounced is unknown. A successful Idea roll in conjunction with the previous Read Ancient Mayan roll reveals the symbols indicate that there may be a fourth city somehow associated with the other three. Scholars may theorize that this fourth city may have even been part of the so-called League of Mayapán, but this is pure speculation at best. The location of the city is not given in the codex as far as the reader is able to determine even though in actuality, it is. Most likely, such a city is located to the east or southeast, well inland and away from both Mayapán and Chichén Itzá.

If all else fails, Calderon can step in to guide the expedition. He will be subtle, but may relay bogus native legends of a city lost deep within the rain forest. While he will claim to have forgotten the specifics of these "legends," he will state that some say the city is still occupied by an ancient race of Mayans who avoided the Spanish. Calderon will avoid saying anything that will draw suspicion or make him seem anything other than an extremely helpful, valuable, and likable member of the expedition. Remember, though, that spoon feeding clues from Calderon should only be done as a last resort.

The Next Step

Ultimately, the investigators should have a fair shot at getting at the city, barring exceptionally tragic circumstances or unusually incompetent or indecisive actions. The trip itself may be as brutalized captives, a heart stopping pursuit through scrubby forest, or a slow, plodding trek behind a capable tracker. Regardless, the group should reach the lost city sometime during the scenario.

Reaching the city will take a minimum of six days since the distance is ninety-three miles from Mayapán. It may take much longer if Land Navigation or Track rolls are routinely failed or if the travellers are poorly equipped, trained, or prepared.

The Lost City

Named Xiuhepetl, the city is occupied by the Cult of Ithaqua, the group that interprets this Cthulhu Mythos deity as being Kukulcán. Most of the city is in ruins, just as other Mayan cities are. However, the city center is just as it was at the height of Mayan civilization. Monuments, stelæ, temples, and pyramids abound, all fully painted and impeccably maintained. Arrayed around them are the huts and other dwellings of the people of the city, all of whom are totally devoted to Kukulcán. Outside the immediate area of the city center, the forest has reclaimed the city, leaving only vegetation-covered mounds and broken stonework.

Due to the danger of raids from the opposing Yig cult, guards are posted on the city's perimeter around the clock. They are always vigilant since hit and run attacks in the past have been destructive and sometimes yield the enemy surprisingly good results. Investigators who hope to slip into the city to rescue comrades or scout the area will have to contend with them.

The next section provides a fairly detailed description of the city. Using this description with the accompanying map, the Keeper can deal with most any plan the group concocts. Most likely, they will want to observe the city for a time to get an idea of where the most activity is, who is present, and where their missing friends might be. In fact, simply observing it may be all they need or want to do. If so, the Keeper should allow them to witness a shocking ritual from afar (information on this is provided later) or perhaps some paranormal or supernatural events. SAN loss for this is variable. Groups that are planning to attack or infiltrate the city should probably not be hit with such visions unless they take a long time to observe.

Below is a description of the major points of interest within Xiuhepetl. These correspond to those labelled on the accompanying map.

The Temple of Kukulcán

Modeled after the Temple of Kukulcán in Chichén Itzá, this is the largest individual structure in the city, being seventy-five feet in height. It is a classic Mayan step pyramid and up each of its four sides runs a set of steep stairs. Like its counterpart in Chichén Itzá, each of the four sets of stairs has ninety-one steps, giving the pyramid a total of 364 steps. The top of the pyramid, on which rests a temple building, is the 365th step and the number of steps is representative of the 365 days on the Mayan calendar.

This temple is the center of religious life in the city. Almost all human sacrifices and most ceremonies and rituals occur on its summit, usually in full view of the cheering populace below. Certain private rituals intended merely for the priesthood are conducted within the temple building out of sight of the masses.

Unlike some of the pyramids of Egypt, this specimen does not have extensive interior rooms or corridors. It is essentially a solid structure. Were archæologists to have time with it, they would eventually find that a smaller pyramid is within it, but cannot be reached except by tunneling into the stone. This is not a particularly surprising feature; many of the pyramids of Mesoamerica are constructed in this manner. As an older pyramid outlived its usefulness, it would be stripped of its old surfaces and a new layer would be added. The result would be a renovated pyramid that could be considerably larger. Some pyramids were renovated multiple times with each previous layer being covered by a new one. In the case of this structure, it was altered only once and that was well before the Spanish conquest.

The pyramid itself is considered a temple. However, the temple structure at its summit is the actual location of rituals. Within the building are three rooms that are diagrammed separately.

Room #1: This is an antechamber to the rest of the structure. In the north wall is the exit to the outside and the arch of that doorway is an intricately carved plumed serpent. On the outside, it is flanked by a pair of plumed serpents that are coiled, as if to strike. In their mouths is the face of Kukulcán. The antechamber itself is decorated with bright frescoes depicting human sacrifices and other ritualistic scenes. The room is empty except for a pair of censers (pottery incense burners) much like those commonly found at Mayapán. These are effigies of Kukulcán. If several people were captured at Mayapán, it is possible one or two are bound and perhaps gagged (if they were troublesome) in here.

Room #2: The main room of the temple is the altar room which is dominated by a great altar dedicated to Kukulcán. Brilliantly painted, it appears to be a great, arched, plumed serpent. Across its arched back a victim can be stretched and when so positioned, he or she is literally facing the carved face of Kukulcán which is emerging from the jaws of the reptile. Embedded in the eyes of the god are finely carved and polished rock crystals and when the light is right, it appears as if the face has stars for eyes. In addition to the altar, the room contains six censers like those in the antechamber (Room #1) and wooden shelves. The latter are against the south wall and hold codices and religious paraphernalia. It is likely that at any given time, one or more priests or acolytes are in here conducting research or preparing for a ceremony. A bound prisoner or two may be here and if so, there will at least be a guard and probably a priest or two as well.

The room has one secret not obvious to any visitor. The altar is resting on top of (and thus concealing) a four foot by four foot hole in the floor. This altar is on concealed casters and can be pushed aside to reveal a vertical shaft of the same dimensions that descends fifteen feet to a room below. This room is at the top of the older pyramid now enclosed by the newer one and is within the walls of the temple building on top of that pyramid. In each corner of the room is a single censer and in its center is an altar like that above. However, this altar is different. It is made almost entirely of jade. Literally thousands of pieces went into its making and the workmanship is so good that it has a genuine green scaly appearance like that of a serpent. Like the newer altar above, the eyes of Kukulcán are clear rock crystals while the eyes of the serpent are large rubies. Knowing the immense value of jade in Mayan culture, archæologists can conclude that this altar was undoubtedly the single most valuable object in the ancient Mayan world. Resting on the altar is another jade object that is hardly less impressive. It is a mask made of scores of pieces of polished jade. Known as the Mask of Kukulcán, it has special powers that are detailed later. The final object in here is a great codex known as the *Great Tonalamatl*. It, too, is described later.

This room is unhealthy for the outsider. If the name of Kukulcán is not invoked in the ancient Mayan tongue, something which few of the investigators are likely to have even remotely adequate knowledge of, the room becomes a death trap. The priests long ago arranged with their deity for a guardian to appear in the event outsiders ever came to desecrate this, their greatest shrine. Within 1D6 minutes, one of the Minions of Ithaqua will enter the room through a gate in the north wall. This can be prevented in only two ways. First, invoking the name of Kukulcán will fool the guardian

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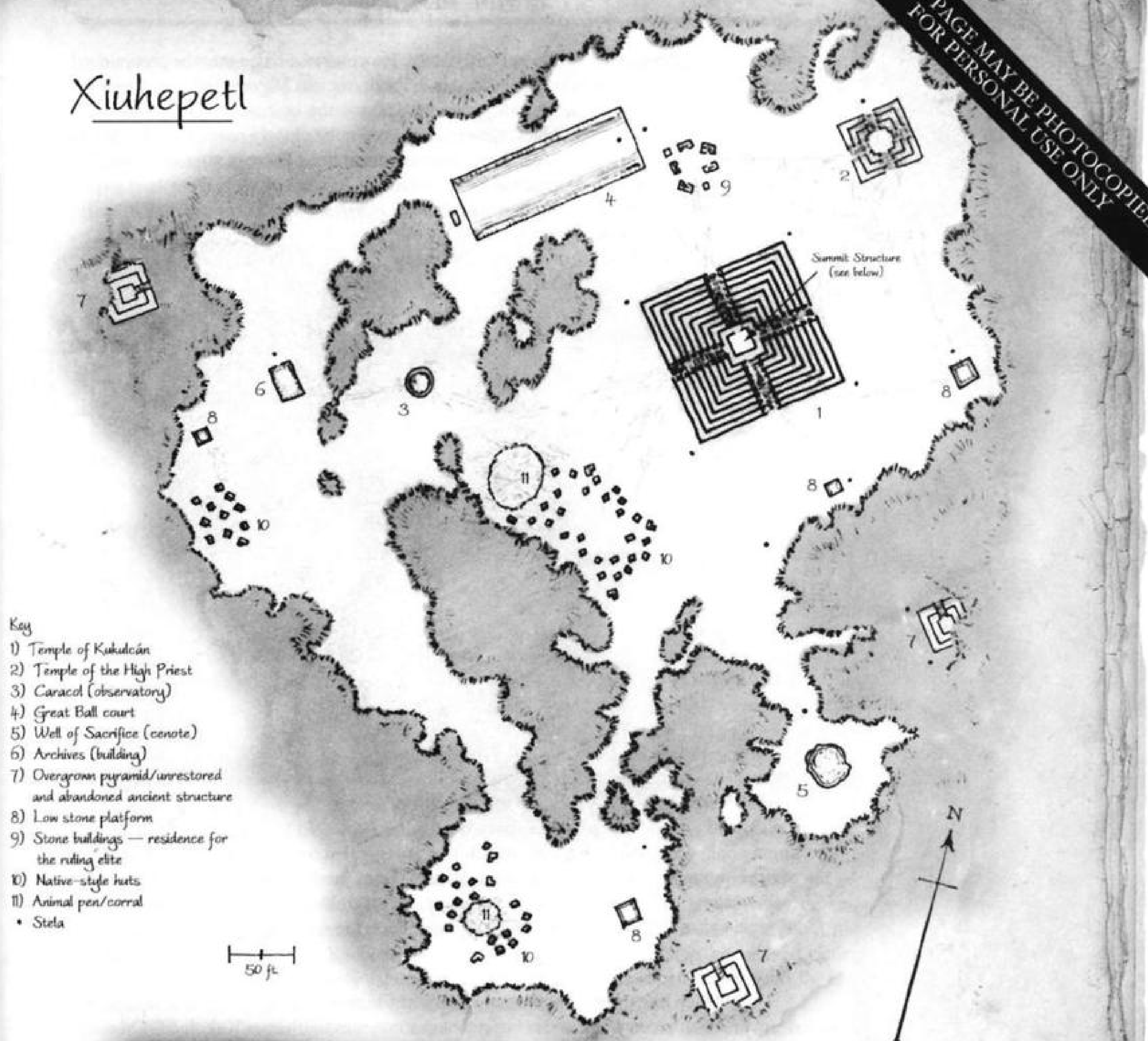
Xiuhepetl
Summit Structure (see below)
1
2
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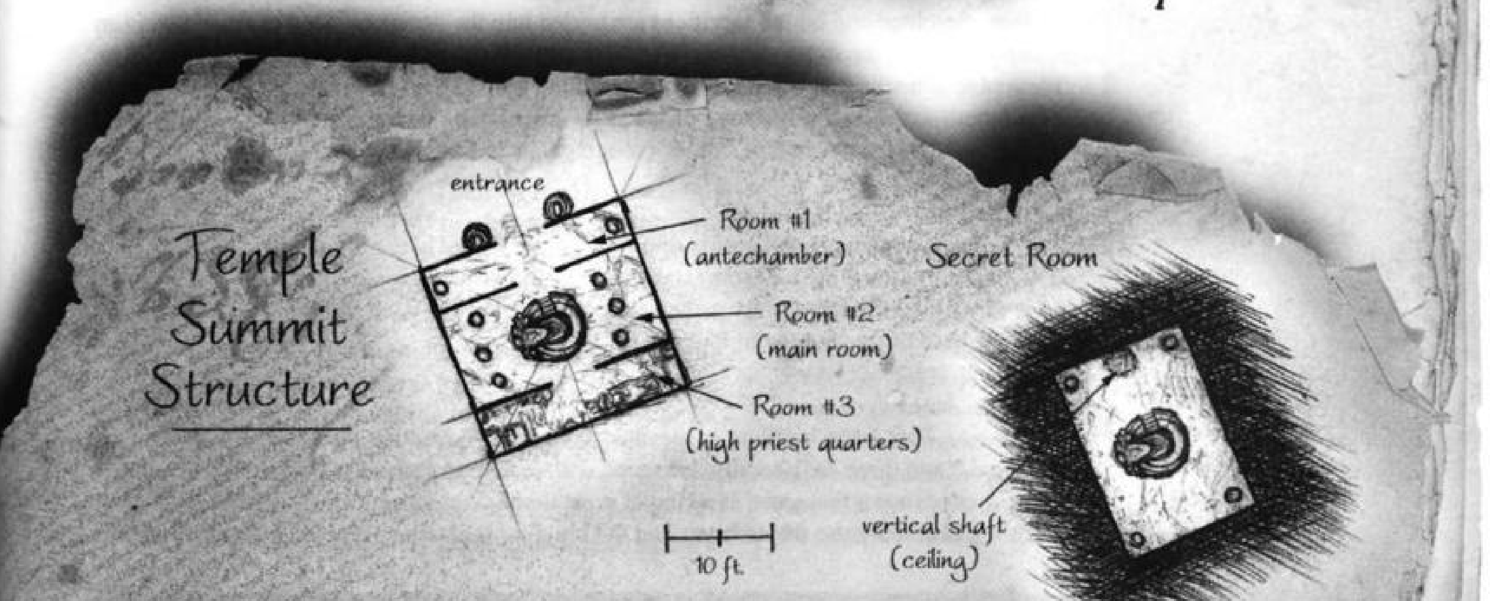
N
Key
1) Temple of Kukulcán
2) Temple of the High Priest
3) Caracol (observatory)
4) Great Ball court
5) Well of Sacrifice (cenote)
6) Archives (building)
7) Overgrown pyramid/unrestored and abandoned ancient structure
8) Low stone platform
9) Stone buildings — residence for the ruling elite
10) Native-style huts
11) Animal pen/corral
• Stela
50 ft.


Temple Summit Structure
entrance
Room #1 (antechamber)
Room #2 (main room)
Room #3 (high priest quarters)
Secret Room
vertical shaft (ceiling)
10 ft.

into believing the intruders are here legitimately. However, the name must be pronounced correctly, requiring the speaker to succeed in a Speak Ancient Mayan skill roll. Since the exact structure of spoken ancient Mayan is unknown, the best one can hope for is to succeed in a Speak Yucatec roll. Yucatec is believed to be closely related and if the roll is made at half its normal chance, the speaker is successful. There is no way, of course, to know that Kukulcán's name must be invoked so it is almost certain the guardian will appear. The other way to prevent the arrival of the guardian is to place an Elder Sign on the gate, thus sealing it. Unfortunately, no Elder Sign is provided anywhere in this scenario. Detecting the gate is difficult. The correct portion of the wall must be examined carefully and a Spot Hidden roll may then be attempted. If successful, the viewer notices the wall seems strangely fluid and may then attempt a Cthulhu Mythos roll to know it is a gate.

Room #3: This room serves as the private quarters for the high priest. Within are complete living quarters plus storage for religious objects and even an assortment of codices.

PLAYER CHARACTERS

THE BROTHERS HERRAN
Jaime, Jesus & Jose

Folklorists, anthropologists, guitarists, and composers and performers of the *Concerto for Thompson.*

Died July 17th, 1925

(boisterous, fraternal laughter followed by frantic gunfire and high-pitched screaming)

The Observatory

Similar in layout to Chichén Itzá's famous Caracol, this structure is where the skies are observed by the city's priest-astronomers. Occasionally, a ceremony is conducted on the walkway around the building, but this is rare.

The Pyramid of the High Priest

This forty foot high step pyramid has no temple or other building atop it. It merely serves as a repository for the mortal remains of the high priests of Kukulcán. Uncounted generations of priests have been buried here. In fact, the entire structure is simply honeycombed with burial tunnels that are resealed once full. In cavities throughout the pyramid, the skeletal remains of priests are jumbled together in a haphazard fashion along with some personal belongings. As an archæological find, this structure is of great value, but it otherwise serves no function in the scenario.

The Well of Sacrifice

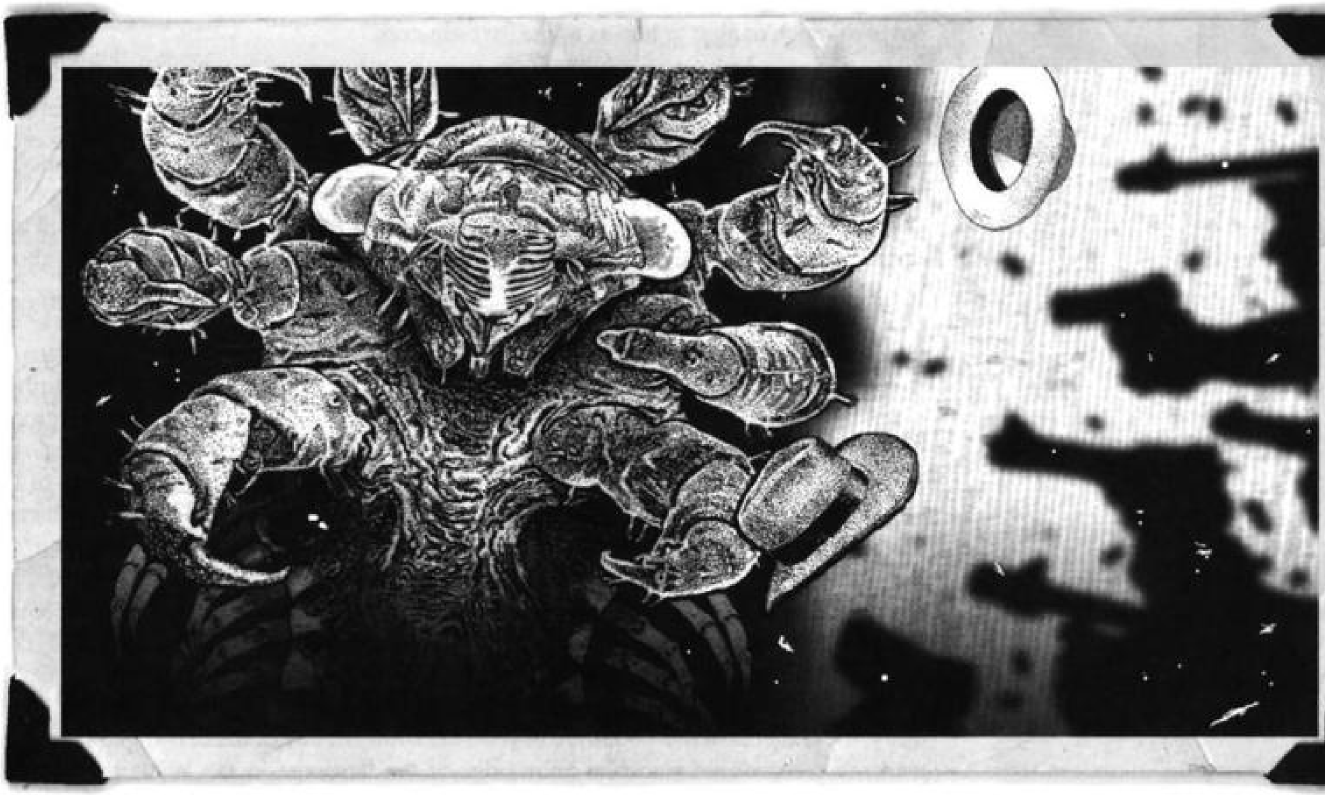
Much like the well of the same name at Chichén Itzá, this large cenote contains deep, brackish green water and is important in some rites to Ithaqua/Kukulcán. On occasion, weighted and bound sacrifices are hurled into the water in a kind of ritual that is an alternative to the more common and traditional (for these people) heart removal. The most recent sacrifice was an American explorer named Craig Hackett who was thrown in a month or so ago. Evidence of his presence may be found in the hands of the high priests who still have some of his belongings, including a passport.

The Great Ball Court

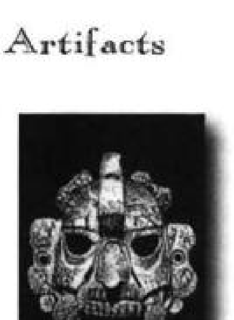
The famous ball games of the Maya are played here only on the winter solstice. At all other times, the ball court stands empty and virtually ignored. Visitors might think it well suited for community gatherings or rallies, but any such activities are always held at the base of the Temple of Kukulcán.

The Archives

This large building is elevated on a solid limestone platform. Columns surround it and these are liberally decorated with feathered serpents. Within the structure is a series of rooms that serve as a kind of great library and scriptorium. Only the priest and ruling class may use the archives and the building is always occupied by attendants and lesser priests adding to the already massive collection of codices. Old codices are recopied and those that are in poor condition are mended, if possible. Archæologists and historians in the group will be elated to discover this great treasure. Literally thousands of documents are here, many dating back to pre-Conquest years. The Keeper should not allow this library to fall into the hands of the investigators. It is an easy task to have a lamp or censer overturn during a raid or infiltration and start a fire. Those highly dedicated to the study of the Mayan civilization will lose 1/1D4 SAN (1/1D6 in special cases if the Keeper so decides) as they watch the library and its immensely valuable contents burn. Of course, this tactic is unnecessary if the group simply ignores the building and never learns of its contents or importance.



Artifacts



The Mask of Kukulcán

This mask is a magnificent object composed of scores of polished jade pieces affixed to a gold framework. There appears to be no way to don the mask so anyone examining it will probably assume it is meant to be held in front of one's face. This isn't exactly the case. When pressed to one's face, the mask adheres and cannot be removed without succeeding in a POWx1 roll. It does not do anything abhorrent to the wearer in a physical sense, but it does itch slightly. The wearer immediately loses 1/1D6 SAN and observers lose 0/1D2 SAN.

For members of the Cult of Ithaqua, this is a symbol of power and a means of gaining knowledge and power. To others, it is simply a source of insanity. For several rounds after the mask is put on, nothing happens and another POWx1 roll may be attempted. If successful, the mask drops away with no further ill effect (returning 1D2 SAN back to the relieved victim). Of course, if it is placed back on someone's face, the entire process begins to repeat itself.

A victim who misses this second POWx1 roll is in for a rough time. Every minute it remains on, he or she is allowed another try to succeed in a POWx1 roll. When one is successful, the mask drops off, but this time, no SAN is recovered. Wearers of the mask are treated to a variety of unpleasant visions and all sensation relating to the outside world is completely blotted out. Some are visions of the past and others are present, but all have a horrific supernatural element to them. Summonings of Ithaqua in the Arctic and visions of Carcosa are typical examples though virtually anything that is nasty and SAN shattering may be experienced. The poor fool suffering this treatment loses 1D6/1D20 SAN per minute, but gains +1D4% Cthulhu Mythos. If the wearer's SAN rating reaches zero, he or she becomes a permanent and unrepentant follower of Ithaqua and is, of course, hopelessly and irrevocably insane. Only then will the mask drop off of its own accord. The high priests know how to manipulate the mask and know the

ancient words required to remove it. In the hands of the investigators, this dangerous object should be of no use.

Destroying the mask is relatively easy. It can be smashed with a heavy hammer or melted. However, it is a valuable historical find and archæologists in the group may be hesitant to eliminate it if they believe they can keep it out of the hands of the cult. Calderon will, of course, oppose its destruction and even threaten government intervention if any harm comes to it. His motivations are personal since he wants to claim it for his use and the use of his cult. He does not understand its true ties to Ithaqua and that it poses as much danger to him as to the investigators.

The Great Tonalamatl

Called in one source the *Book of Fate*, the tonalamatl was created by Quetzalcóatl as a means of determining prophecies. Priests used tonalamatls to determine favorable and unfavorable days and even was the source for names to be given to children. Their importance became known to missionary priests who targeted them for destruction above virtually all other documents.

The most important codex belonging to the Cult of Ithaqua is one known as the *Great Tonalamatl*. This document is believed by the priesthood to have been written by Kukulcán himself and contains a transcript of all vital religious knowledge. Furthermore, the codex contains great power that can be harnessed by someone with the proper knowledge. Measuring twenty meters in length and written in ancient Mayan, the *Great Tonalmatl* is a great source of arcane lore. It contains the following spells: Chill of the Wendigo, Clutch of Nyogtha, Wrack, Contact Minion of Ithaqua, Call/Dismiss Ithaqua, Summon Dark Young of Shub-Niggurath, Bind Dark Young of Shub-Niggurath, Call/Dismiss Shub-Niggurath, Summon Byakhee, Bind Byakhee, Call/Dismiss Hastur, Call/Dismiss Nyogtha, Contact Formless Spawn of Tsathogghua, Contact Tsathogghua, Shrivelling, Wither Limb, Flesh Ward, Create Gate. The text causes a SAN loss of 1D4/1D20 and provides successful readers with +15% Cthulhu Mythos. Reading it completely takes eight months and requires two successful Read Ancient Mayan skill rolls. Obviously, the contents of this codex are beyond the ability of any of the investigators to read, learn, or comprehend since the knowledge of the language in the 1920s is still in its infancy. However, in the hands of cultists like Calderon, it is a valuable tool.

Observing the City

Simply observing the city can prove to be an excellent tactic as long as the guards are avoided. Fortunately, their positions are usually obvious. A small group can dodge them as long as each person succeeds in a Sneak roll. If any fails, one guard may notice them or notice their presence if his Spot Hidden roll succeeds.

In short, observers see daily life in an ancient Mayan city. Foragers enter the forest in search of the fruits of nature and generally return with small game, roots, berries, and the like. Farmers cultivate fields nearby and provide the lion's share of the food needed by the inhabitants. Within the city itself, daily life goes on, everything from the crafting of baskets and pottery to cooking food and mending rooftops. Before long, the general hierarchy can be seen. A fairly small percentage of the population is part of the warrior class. Some warriors wear distinctive cotton armor vests though this is rare. All wear colorful feathers with these obviously relating to their status in the community. The number and quality of feathers seems to indicate the individual's rank or social standing. Similarly, priests are easy to spot. All wear some sort of feathered headdress as do some of the higher ranking warriors. Priests generally are unarmed, unlike the warriors, except for perhaps a ceremonial flint dagger. They are most commonly seen in the vicinity of the Temple of Kukulcán, the Observatory, and the Archives. Aside from the warriors who may be seen most anywhere, most of the people are poor or relatively so. Some wealthy individuals are present and are notable due to their jewelry and feathers and these do not appear to be part of the priesthood or the warrior class. In most cases, they are nobility of some sort.

Before too long, the group will observe something unusual. The Keeper should feel free to devise something supernatural or disturbing for the investigators to view. A sample ritual is provided below for this purpose.

A Sacrifice

At whatever time the Keeper feels is appropriate (preferably daytime so the group can see this through field glasses or binoculars), priests gather atop the Temple of Kukulcán. Before them is placed an altar of sorts, decorated with images of the plumed serpent. Five principal priests are present plus several attendents who are on hand to assist. The people of the city are called together to witness the great ritual.

Soon, a naked individual is brought out of the temple building. This person may be a captured expedition member or perhaps a Mayan farmer or Yig cultist. Regardless, the individual has been painted blue. Observers who are authorities on Mayan lore should recognize this and may attempt Knowledge, History, and/or Anthropology rolls. If successful, said individuals will realize this appears to be the beginning of what a few little known (and fringe element) scholars have claimed is a human sacrifice. This should be cause for confusion for the prevailing theory at this time was that the Mayans were a peaceful people and it was the Aztecs who conducted the bulk of sacrifices.

Human Sacrifice

Human sacrifice was a common occurrence among the Maya and the other peoples of the Mesoamerican world. Perhaps the most common form was removal of the heart by excision.

The process began by stripping the victim and painting him or her blue (the sacrificial color). A special ceremonial headdress was then placed upon the victim's head and he or she was then led to the place of sacrifice. Victims could at times be almost anyone, but choice candidates were high ranking war prisoners. Criminals, slaves, and unwanted children were also fodder for the priests' knives and by some accounts, children were the preferred victims.

The place of sacrifice varied, but could be a temple courtyard or the top of a pyramid bearing a temple. The altar consisted of a convex stone that would, when the victim was laid on it, cause the chest cavity to arch upward. Four people representing the chacs (wind gods) would hold the victim's limbs while the Nacom (a kind of war leader who would actually commit the sacrifice) would produce a flint sacrificial knife. Plunging this into the ribs below the left breast, he would reach through the opening and pull the still beating heart from its former residence. The heart was passed to the priest in charge of the ritual. Blood was then smeared on the idol to which the sacrifice was made.

Next, the victim's body was heaved off the platform, to be skinned by priests. The Chilam (a kind of shaman who, while in a state of trance, received messages from the gods) would then don the skin with the hands and feet dangling from the bloody mess. He would then dance about as part of the conclusion of the ceremony. Sometimes the body was eaten, especially if the victim was a brave soldier or otherwise notable.

Not surprisingly, other methods of sacrifice existed. Of the better known are the sacrifices made at the Well of Sacrifice in Chichén Itzá. This deep cenote was believed to be the dwelling place of the gods and sacrifices were tossed in to placate them. Material sacrifices such as jewelry and knives were generally broken prior to being thrown in. However, human sacrifices were also offered. In this case, victims were adorned in special garb and were pushed in. The hope was that the victim would return with messages from the gods. History tells us of only one who did and he became a great leader. When the Well of Sacrifice was dredged, human remains were recovered and of these, a disturbingly large percentage were children.

The victim is thrust forward to the altar/sacrificial block and is probably struggling against his or her captors (however, a Yig cultist will not struggle and will accept his or her fate here). A few sharp words and a knife placed to the throat will likely quiet the bothersome victim. An impressive ceremonial headdress is placed on the captive's head and after some ritual chanting, he or she is stretched across the convex block. This causes the chest to extend upwards, making what is about to happen easier for the priest.

Once in place, four priests hold the captive's limbs in place while the head priest begins his own chanting. Next, he brings forth a ceremonial flint knife. No more procrastinating; he plunges it into the ribs below the left breast. Reaching through the opening, he efficiently pulls the still beating heart from the chest cavity. Needless to say, the victim is no longer in any condition to struggle and the priests holding the limbs release them. The heart is passed around for each to take a bite. Once done, the body is hurled from the platform, to be skinned by priests in the crowd at the base of the pyramid. The hide is then donned by a priest with the hands and feet dangling from the bloody mess. He then dances about as part of the conclusion of the ceremony.

The crowd is then allowed the partake of the body and a cannibalistic feeding frenzy ensues, lasting perhaps a half hour or so. The occasion is not a solemn one; in fact, it is entirely the opposite. The people are obviously pleased by the ritual, and genuinely so.

Witnessing this ritual causes the loss of SAN to outsiders. The base SAN loss is 1D6/1D20 and an additional loss of 1D2/1D10 is inflicted if the victim was a friend or close associate. Less SAN is lost if the observers intentionally turn away and depart, but if a friend or associate is

the subject of the ritual, turning away may actually cause more SAN loss (Keeper's discretion).

The Keeper must make a decision at this point. The ritual can simply go on as described and serve any number of functions. It could simply be an offering to the gods or some sort of community event designed to tie the population together. On the other hand, it could have a more dire purpose. It could be a way of summoning some horrid entity from beyond (the author recommends a Minion of Ithaqua or a Dark Young of Shub-Niggurath) or perhaps a means of beseeching the gods for aid in eliminating those desecrating Mayapán. The options here are myriad. If a creature is summoned, SAN loss for its arrival should also be inflicted on observers.

Coming to a Conclusion

Once in the area of the city, the investigators have several options. They may, of course, simply view the city and its inhabitants as being a great archæological discovery that should be investigated, albeit cautiously. The Keeper can quickly bring things into proper perspective here with some supernatural occurrances such as the summoning of a Minion of Ithaqua. Investigators who openly approach in peace hoping to bargain with the people are in for a rare treat. They will be swiftly seized, disarmed, and imprisoned. Later, they will be sacrificed to Kukulcán.

Infiltrating the city is a daring and possibly rewarding tactic. As long as guards and citizens are avoided, much can be learned. If they are lucky, they may be able to make off with precious codices and perhaps even rescue prisoners slated for sacrifice. They can also gain information the Mexican government will later need if they decide to send in troops.

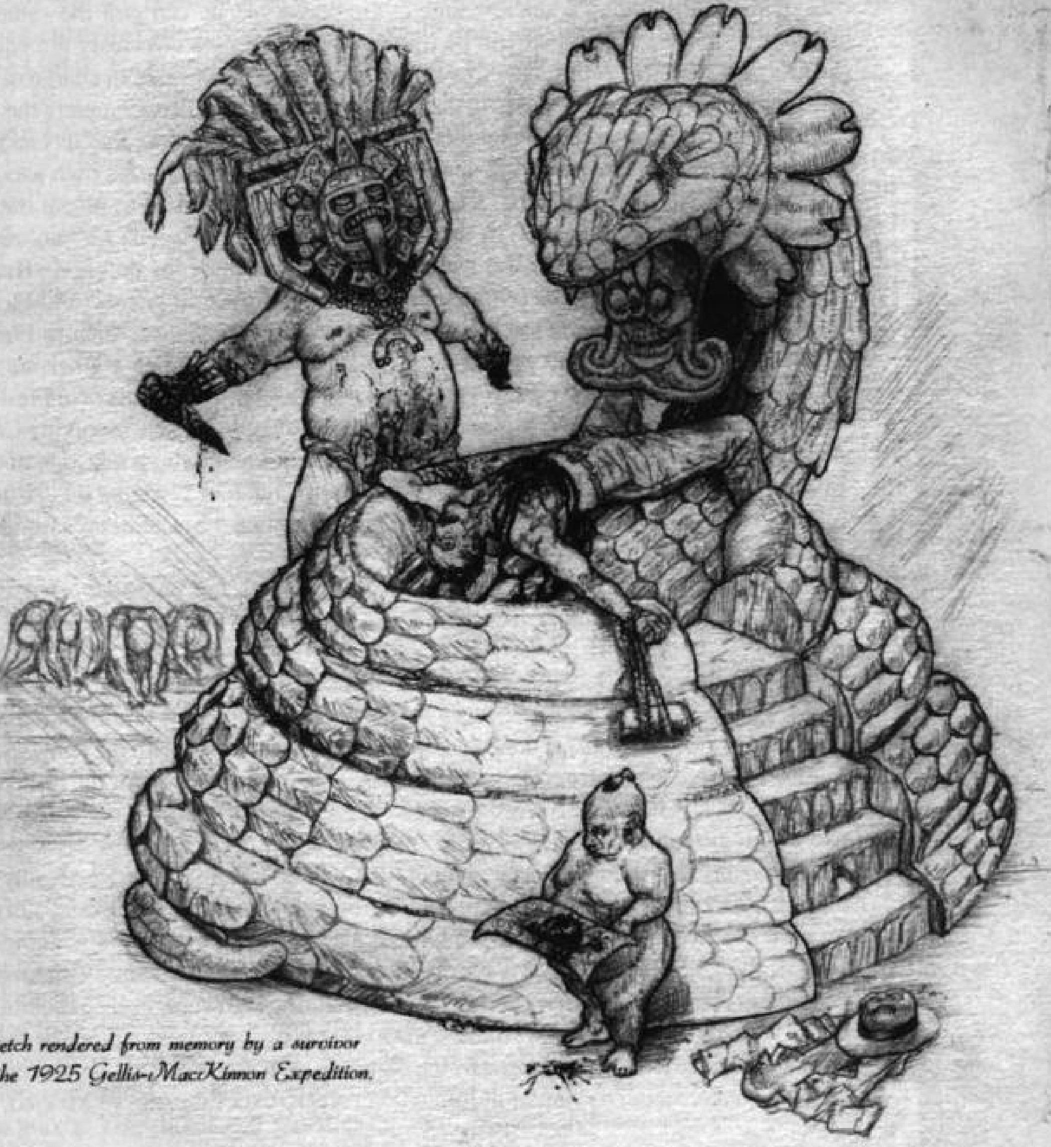
In the final analysis, the group has only a few options. Simply escaping the region alive can be considered a victory. There is no great threat to the world here (though the Keeper may imply one exists), but the hostility and violence of the people must (should) be reported to the authorities. A few prisoners (sacrificial victims) in the city are obviously outsiders (Mayan farmers, Mexican government bureaucrats, etc.), making it evident they prey on the people of the region. Because the cult population is so great, no sane person will consider attacking the city without extremely good cause such as a friend being in the hands of the priesthood.

Calderon Uncloaked

At this point, the one huge loose end is Carlos Calderon. Up to this point, it has been assumed he is still alive and in the good graces of the player characters. However, it is here that, one way or another, Calderon will reveal himself and show the group that he has simply been manipulating them all along.

The purpose of Calderon taking on the lost city in this manner is not as strange as it may seem. Had he just revealed it to the Mexican government on his own, he would have had no control over what occurred. Most likely, the federal government would have sent in the troops, cleared out the cult, and then commandeered the region in the interest of archæological research. Calderon lacked the clout to have any control over this and would not want the city in government hands unless he and his cult had real control behind the scenes. His plan has several facets and these are listed below.

(1) If the investigators can clear the city for him, he will take the credit when he makes his report to the government. Furthermore, he will arrange for the group to be unceremoniously kicked out of the country due to a variety of possibly falsified charges (stealing or damaging artifacts, unlawful use or possession of weapons, etc.). Any items they have recovered during their travels will be confiscated and will probably end up in Calderon's hands in the long run. The clearing of the city will have secured his reputation and will earn him the leadership of its study. In such a position, he can pick and choose who is present and can pretty much move his people/cult to the area as diggers and support



– Sketch rendered from memory by a survivor of the 1925 Gellis-MacKinnon Expedition.

SAN
Rewards and Penalties

Action/Event	Reward/Penalty
Escape with no deaths	+1D10 SAN
Report lost city to the Mexican government	+1D6 SAN
Kill a Minion of Ithaqua	+1D10 SAN
Eliminate Carlos Calderon (only if he is known to be a villain)	+1D8 SAN
Witness a human sacrifice	-1D6 SAN
Witness the sacrifice of a friend	-1D10 SAN
Learn of the sacrifice of a friend	-1D4 SAN
A friend or close NPC is killed	-1D6 SAN

personnel.

(2) If the investigators somehow bungle the operation, he can pull the same stunt as above except the government will be told that foreigners are obviously not equipped to handle the operation. Thus, he will ensure that he is the one placed in charge of studying the city after troops are sent in to clear it. Furthermore, he will accompany the troops as a guide and observer and thus can direct their attack in such a way that he can minimize the damage to the city and secure specific items and treasures for his own use.

(3) If personally involved in an attack, Calderon may be forced to reveal himself in a graphic and obvious manner. He has a personal battery of spells he may resort to if weapons are not available or are not sufficient to guarantee his defence. His favorite spells are Clutch of Nyogtha (popular among many of the cult priests) and Flesh Ward. Because enemy cult priests are believed to have magical defenses such as Flesh Ward, Calderon will not bother to use his sidearm against such people. Rather, he will take them out with Clutch of Nyogtha or something similar, employing his own Flesh Ward to defend himself from the investigators and Ithaqua cultists. A scene involving Calderon's confrontation with a rather surprised head of the Ithaqua cult (who is unaware of Calderon or his powers) can be quite memorable. After all, Clutch of Nyogtha has visual results and watching a cult priest drop and a smoking heart appear in Calderon's upraised hand can do much to terrify and confuse.

In the aftermath of the discovery of Xiuhepetl, the investigators may receive great rewards or great punishments. Ideally, Calderon will have manipulated them all along.

In the event Calderon is somehow thwarted, the situation improves vastly. Upon arriving in Mérida, artifacts recovered in the wilderness must be reported to the government and turned in. If this is done promptly and in accordance with the contract, the first hurdle will have been successfully negotiated. Next, the discovery of the lost city can be reported. If it is not and no word reaches the government (perhaps via some NPC), the lost city will remain lost. However, if the government learns that the Miskatonic team found the city, but didn't report it, the contract will be instantly and irrevocably revoked and criminal charges may be levied at those group members still in Mexico. On the other hand, if the existence of the city is reported and said report is accurate, complete, and honest, the government may very well be very grateful to the team. This assumes, of course, no crimes or atrocities were committed during the scenario by expedition members. A grateful Mexican government may grant a contract to examine the lost city to Miskatonic once it has been cleared by the Army. Even if this doesn't work out, Miskatonic could get preferential treatment in future contracts to excavate sites in Mexico.

NPCs

Dr. Stanislaw Badowski, expedition leader (optional)

Nationality: American

STR 12	**DEX** 14	**INT** 15	**CON** 12	**APP** 15
POW 14	**SIZ** 13	**EDU** 20	**SAN** 66	**Luck** 70

Hits: 13 **Age**: 44

Damage Modifier: +1D4

Education: Ph.D. in Anthropology from the University of Pennsylvania

Skills: Anthropology 51%, Archæology 62%, Bargain 19%, Botany 11%, Climb 50%, Credit Rating 26%, Drive Automobile 30%, Fast Talk 44%, Geology 21%, History 66%, Jump 35%, Law 11%, Library Use 75%, Listen 40%, Mechanical Repair 26%, Land Navigation 50%, Occult 49%, Persuade 56%, Photography 25%, Psychology 15%, Ride 57%, Spot Hidden 76%, Swim 39%, Zoology 10%

Languages: English 95%, Latin 60%, Polish 79%, Spanish 68%

Attacks:

Handgun 27%, 1D10+2 damage (.45 revolver)

Notes: Dr. Badowski is a second generation Polish-American who earned a Ph.D. in Anthropology from the University of Pennsylvania in 1908. A capable and competent archæologist, he is a veteran of several minor forays into the Yucatán though this is his first major expedition in the region. He specializes in Native American studies, particularly of groups in Central and South America. Badowski is an optional character the Keeper may employ as expedition leader. He may also be used by a player as a pre-generated character.

Ten Mayan Laborers

	Emilio	Gaston	Jesus	José	Juan	Julio	Luis	Miguel	Pedro	Tomás
STR	12	14	16	12	11	15	17	14	12	15
DEX	9	16	12	12	15	11	10	14	15	13
INT	12	9	15	13	12	11	16	13	12	12
CON	13	14	15	10	17	14	14	12	15	11
APP	10	12	8	11	15	14	12	9	13	12
POW	11	12	16	9	12	14	12	11	9	13
SIZ	9	10	9	12	9	8	8	10	10	9
EDU	5	6	6	6	4	3	5	4	5	8
SAN	57	61	72	40	49	59	55	51	41	64
Luck	55	60	80	45	60	70	60	55	45	65
Hit Points	11	12	12	11	13	11	11	11	12	10
Damage Modifier	+0	+0	+1D4	+0	+0	+0	+1D4	+0	+0	+1D4
Age	20	19	17	23	16	15	18	17	21	25

Skills Common to All: Climb 75%, Conceal 45%, Hide 40%, Jump 35%, Listen 65%, Land Navigation 40%, Mayan Occult 30%, Sneak 50%, Spot Hidden 65%, Throw 40%, plus whatever other skills the Keeper sees fit to provide them

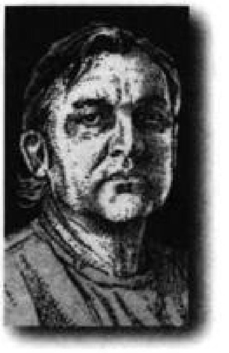
Languages Common to All: Yucatec 60% (spoken only; Tomás is literate), Spanish 50% (only Emilio, José, Luis, Miguel, and Tomás have knowledge of spoken Spanish)

Attacks Common to All:

Sword 35%, 1D8+dm damage (machete)

Knife 35%, 1D4+2+dm damage (hunting knife)

Notes: These ten gentlemen are all unskilled, poorly educated laborers simply hired as muscle for the expedition. They can all be easily taught what technical skills are necessary and most are bright, intelligent people. They will be diligent workers as long as they are paid and treated with respect and will not be a source of trouble. However, when strange things begin to happen, some may desert though a few may, at the Keeper's discretion, overcome their fear of the supernatural and stick around for the long haul. With them around, camp life is never boring. When not working on the dig site, they are busy making life as comfortable as possible for themselves and the Miskatonic team. The investigators should develop an affinity for these men as long as they can overcome whatever personal bigotries they harbor. The expedition will very possibly hire more than ten laborers. If so, the Keeper should feel free to reuse these stats as necessary. Note that these diggers are non-cultists. They represent those who are hired by someone other than Dr. Calderon. Diggers hired by Calderon will be Yig cultists and statistics on these folk are provided later.



Carlos Calderon, archæologist and expedition member and priest of Yig

Nationality: Mexican (Mayan)

STR 13 **DEX** 12 **INT** 15 **CON** 15 **APP** 11 **POW** 14
SIZ 13 **EDU** 19 **SAN** 0 **Luck** 70 **Hits**: 14 **Age**: 41

Damage Modifier: +1D4

Education: Ph.D. in Archæology from the University of Pennsylvania,
M.A. in Linguistics from the University of Mexico City

Skills: Anthropology 45%, Archæology 52%, Boating 25%, Botany 22%, Cartography 30%, Climb 60%, Cthulhu Mythos 22%, Drive Automobile 25%, Geology 35%, History 49%, Mayan History 77%, Jump 40%, Library Use 59%, Listen 47%, Land Navigation 50%, Occult 45%, Mayan Occult 88%, Persuade 32%, Ride 39%, Spot Hidden 60%, Swim 55%, Zoology 6%

Languages: English 77%, German 41%, Latin 75%, Ancient Mayan 70%, Portuguese 90%, Spanish 98%, Yucatec 77%

Attacks:

Handgun 28%, 1D10 damage (.38 revolver)

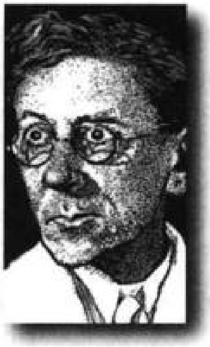
Small Club 30%, 1D6+dm damage (hatchet or small club)

Spells: Call/Dismiss Yig, Clutch of Nyogtha, Flesh Ward, Hands of Colubra, Shrivelling, Summon/Bind Child of Yig, Worms, Wrack

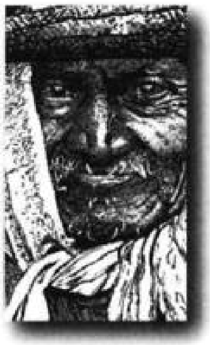
Notes: Dr. Calderon is a qualified field archæologist who has worked at sites throughout Mexico and the southwestern

United States. He allegedly joined the Miskatonic expedition mainly because it was one criteria the Mexican government had for allowing the group to proceed. One of his duties, therefore, is to protect the interests of the Mexican government and prevent (or at least report) looting, damage to the site, and violations of Mexican law. This aside, he is a capable archæologist that will undoubtedly provide valuable service. His experience in the forests of the Yucatán is invaluable and most expedition members will find him to be easygoing and likeable.

This, of course, is public knowledge. In private, he is a dangerous priest of Yig whose polite and helpful veneer belies his ultimate goal. He hopes to use the Miskatonic team to drive the Ithaqua cult from the lost city so his people can occupy it or otherwise gain some measure of control over it. If his plan works to perfection, the Cult of Yig will supplant the Cult of Ithaqua in Xiuhepetl. He does not expect this, though. More likely, but still acceptable to him, is that the government steps in to drive out his lifelong enemies. As long as he is in a position of dominance over the city in the aftermath, he is satisfied. His long term control over the city will ensure the return of his people. No, they will not live in it in the true sense, but they will have access to it for religious purposes and the enemy will not.



Morris Anthony, nervous occultist
Nationalty: American
STR 12 **DEX** 8 **INT** 15 **CON** 11 **APP** 10
POW 7 **SIZ** 13 **EDU** 15 **SAN** 27 **Luck** 35
Hits: 12 **Age**: 44
Damage Modifier: +1D4
Education: B.A. in History from the University of Connecticut
Skills: Anthropology 22%, Archæology 23%, Astronomy 16%, Bargain 31%, Credit Rating 77%, Drive Automobile 30%, History 60%, Law 20%, Library Use 93%, Listen 32%, Occult 81%, Persuade 27%, Photography 33%, Spot Hidden 44%
Languages: English 91%, French 83%, German 73%, Italian 76%, Latin 60%, Portuguese 77%, Spanish 78%
Attacks: none above base skill
Notes: Morris is a nervous and high strung individual who favors white when he dresses. Almost always perspiring, he has a great passion for the occult and collects all sorts of related paraphernalia, particularly books. He will avoid contact with strangers and may act as mysterious or suspicious as the Keeper chooses.



Antonio Gálvez, retired henequen farmer
Nationality: Mexican
STR 6 **DEX** 6 **INT** 15 **CON** 5 **APP** 12
POW 11 **SIZ** 10 **EDU** 15 **SAN** 51 **Luck** 55
Hits: 8 **Age**: 80
Damage Modifier: -1D4
Education: Catholic school
Skills: Accounting 49%, Anthropology 11%, Archæology 10%, Bargain 50%, Botany 33%, Credit Rating 44%, History 35%, Library Use 30%, Natural History 36%, Occult 13%, Persuade 55%, Psychology 40%, Spot Hidden 40%
Languages: English 71%, Latin 44%, Spanish 88%, Yucatec 43%
Attacks: none above base skill
Notes: An extremely frail, wizened gentleman, Señor Gálvez was once a powerful figure of a man who ran his hacienda in an authoritative, but reasonably fair manner. He is well respected within the upper circles of Mérida society, but rarely ventures to town due to his health. He has taken to writing letters to friends he has met over the years, among which is Dr. Badowski of Miskatonic University. The investigators should meet him, either because they are invited to dinner or because they are seeking him out for an interview. Any conversation with him is wholly pleasant for he is obviously friendly and

charismatic despite his advanced years. His wife, Louisa, is ten years his junior and is totally devoted to him.

Tomás Rodriguez, nefarious smuggler
Nationality: Mexican
STR 16 **DEX** 11 **INT** 13 **CON** 17 **APP** 7
POW 12 **SIZ** 16 **EDU** 8 **SAN** 65 **Luck** 60
Hits: 17 **Age**: 30
Damage Modifier: +1D4
Education: none above grade school level
Skills: Bargain 54%, Climb 51%, Conceal 90%, Dodge 50%, Hide 78%, Jump 40%, Listen 60%, Psychology 33%, Sneak 67%, Spot Hidden 80%, Swim 55%, Throw 29%
Languages: English 47% (25% written), Spanish 77% (54% written)
Attacks:
Handgun 36%; 1D10+2 damage (.45 revolver)
Rifle 30%, 2D6+4 damage (.30-06 bolt-action rifle)
Knife 57%, 1D4+2+dm damage (large hunting knife)
Fist/Punch 80%, 1D3+dm damage
Kick 48%, 1D6+dm damage

Notes: Tomás is an underhanded underworld type who makes his living off the suffering of others. He is adept at moving people and cargo across borders and up until recently moved alcohol products into the U.S. in violation of the Prohibition Act. Now he is trying his hand at gun running since U.S. authorities are now watching for him. This new enterprise is less profitable, but he is not worried much about the Mexican government authorities. The investigators may throw the proverbial monkey wrench into his plans. Were this to occur, he will likely cut his losses and run rather than make some infantile effort at revenge. After all, he has been run out of towns before for similar reasons thus will not hold a grudge against the investigators.

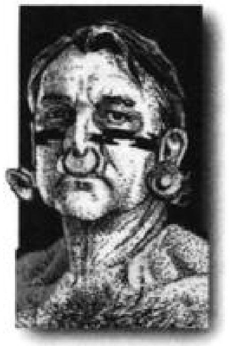
Pablo Cruz, wily street urchin
Nationality: Mayan-Mexican
STR 8 **DEX** 17 **INT** 14 **CON** 12 **APP** 13 **POW** 16
SIZ 8 **EDU** 6 **SAN** 69 **Luck** 80 **Hits**: 10 **Age**: 13
Damage Modifier: -1D4
Education: none above grade school level
Skills: Beg 66%, Climb 71%, Conceal 56%, Hide 94%, Listen 50%, Pick Pocket 62%, Sneak 94%, Spot Hidden 50%
Languages: English 20% (spoken only), Spanish 60% (15% written), Yucatec 60% (spoken only)
Attacks: none above base skill

Notes: Pablo has lived on the streets for months and is adept at begging and petty theft. He lives life from day to day and does not concern himself with thinking much beyond his next meal. Charity will be gratefully accepted though he will resist efforts to adopt him or otherwise reform him. He trusts no adult and has come to enjoy his free life. Sadly, he does not know what he is missing out of life and will likely not survive into adulthood.

Walter Thomas Plunkett, Catholic missionary
Nationality: Irish
STR 15 **DEX** 9 **INT** 14 **CON** 16 **APP** 9 **POW** 16
SIZ 12 **EDU** 14 **SAN** 71 **Luck** 80 **Hits**: 14 **Age**: 45
Damage Modifier: +1D4
Education: seminary school
Skills: Accounting 30%, Anthropology 30%, Archæology 9%, Bargain 62%, Biology 9%, Cthulhu Mythos 1%, Fast Talk 70%, First Aid 44%, History 41%, Listen 35%, Library Use 45%, Land Navigation 40%, Occult 21%, Persuade 64%, Psychology 50%, Spot Hidden 42%
Languages: English 81%, Gaelic (Irish) 83%, German 61%, Latin 68%, Spanish 73%, Yucatec 60%
Attacks: none above base skill

Notes: Father Plunkett is a missionary dedicated with spreading the word of God to the natives of the Yucatán peninsula. He is a devoted priest concerned not only with religious doctrine, but with improving the lives of the Maya. For just over two decades, he has lived and worked in this region and for the past ten has lived near the ruins of Mayapán. Though not

all of the locals subscribe to his teachings, he has earned their respect and even friendship by learning their ways and not ramming his beliefs down their throats. The good padre is friendly to all he encounters and can be a good source of general information as well as specific information on area cultures and languages. He will also shelter the sick and injured without regard for his personal safety. Although he is aware of strange things in the region, he has had no personal encounters nor does he believe anything supernatural is involved.



Kukulcán, cult priest devoted to Yig
Nationality: Mayan
STR 13 **DEX** 12 **INT** 15 **CON** 15 **APP** 11
POW 14 **SIZ** 13 **EDU** n/a **SAN** 0 **Luck** 70
Hits: 14 **Age**: 41
Damage Modifier: +1D4
Education: n/a

Skills: Climb 77%, Conceal 80%, Cthulhu Mythos 44%, Dodge 32%, Hide 82%, Mayan History 70%, Jump 39%, Listen 60%, Land Navigation 65%, Mayan Occult 80%, Persuade 61%, Sneak 75%, Spot Hidden 79%, Swim 31%, Throw 50%, Track 50%

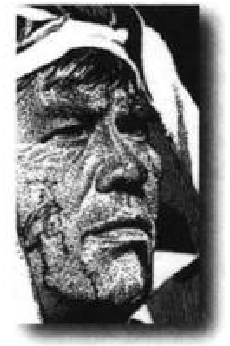
Languages: Ancient Mayan 90%, Spanish 64% (spoken only), Yucatec 90% (spoken only)

Attacks:

Knife 44%, 1D6+dm damage (flint knife)

Spells: Call/Dismiss Yig, Clutch of Nyogtha, Dread Curse of Azathoth, Flesh Ward, Hands of Colubra, Shrivelling, Summon/Bind Child of Yig, Worms, Wrack, plus any other spells the Keeper deems are appropriate

Notes: "Kukulcán" is a title employed by both cults and is applied to the highest ranking priest. In the case of the Cult of Yig, this priest is the identical twin of Carlos Calderon. Working in concert with his brother, it is Kukulcán who will provide diggers for the Miskatonic expedition when they are asked for by Calderon. During the actual play of Heretics, he should not be encountered except for possibly at the very end during an attack on the lost city.



Kukulcán, cult priest devoted to Ithaqua
Nationality: Mayan
STR 15 **DEX** 17 **INT** 16 **CON** 15 **APP** 10
POW 18 **SIZ** 10 **EDU** n/a **SAN** 0 **Luck** 90
Hits: 13 **Age**: 25
Damage Modifier: +1D4
Education: n/a

Skills: Climb 65%, Conceal 47%, Cthulhu Mythos 29%, Dodge 40%, First Aid 36%, Hide 67%, Mayan History 80%, Jump 39%, Listen 44%, Land Navigation 65%, Mayan Occult 93%, Persuade 70%, Psychology 20%, Sneak 65%, Spot Hidden 71%, Swim 30%, Throw 50%, Track 22%

Languages: Ancient Mayan 90%, Spanish 41% (spoken only), Yucatec 90% (spoken only)

Attacks:

Large Club 50%, 1D8+dm damage (war club)
Knife 75%, 1D6+dm damage (ceremonial obsidian dagger)
Atlatl 50%, 1D6 damage (flint-tipped spear hurled from atlatl)

Spells: Call/Dismiss Ithaqua, Chill of the Wendigo, Clutch of Nyogtha, Contact Minion of Ithaqua, Shrivelling, Wrack, plus any other spells the Keeper deems are appropriate

Notes: When he rose to the position of High Priest, Kukulcán's old name was cast away in favor of the title "Kukulcán." He is the most devoted cultist and constantly maintains a retinue of educated and capable priests. He is completely unaware of the existence of

Carlos Calderon and spends a typical day studying, communing with his god, and performing rituals. Rituals often involve one or more human sacrifices and these are usually conducted atop the lost city's great pyramid. In the event of an attack on the city, he will be well guarded by a personal force of fanatical warriors and priests. While this may prevent a clear rifle shot or the like, it will probably not prevent a spell cast unexpectedly by Calderon.

Ten Cult Warriors

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
STR	12	15	11	12	16	13	13	14	10	14
DEX	10	12	14	14	12	11	10	17	11	16
INT	10	12	16	11	12	14	9	13	13	15
CON	12	17	15	13	12	16	15	12	15	14
APP	8	12	9	12	10	11	14	9	14	15
POW	9	12	14	13	11	16	11	12	13	10
SIZ	9	10	8	9	8	12	9	10	11	9
SAN	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Luck	45	60	70	65	55	80	55	60	65	50
Hit Points	11	14	12	11	10	14	12	11	13	12
Damage Modifier	+0	+1D4	+0	+0	+0	+1D4	+0	+0	+0	+0

Skills Common to All: Climb 65%, Conceal 50%, Dodge 40%, Hide 80%, Jump 40%, Listen 70%, Land Navigation 70%, Sneak 80%, Spot Hidden 75%, Swim 30%, Throw 40%, Track 55%

Languages Common to All: Ancient Mayan 60%+ (spoken only)

Attacks:

Large Club 40%, 1D8+dm damage (heavy, one-handed war club)
Sword 40%, 1D8+dm damage (Macuahuitl); employed by Ithaqua cultists only
Knife 50%, 1D6+dm damage (flint or obsidian dagger)
Spear 40%, 1D6+1+dm damage (flint-tipped spear, held)
Atlatl 40%, 1D6 damage (flint-tipped spear hurled from atlatl)
Bow 40%, 1D8 damage (flint-tipped arrow fired from relatively weak bow);
more commonly used by Ithaqua cultists

Armor: one point of cotton fiber armor (used by 30% of Ithaqua cultists only; covers and protects torso only)

Notes: These statistics belong to ten rank and file warriors of either cult. EDU ratings are not provided since they are irrelevant and not applicable to a people who lack formal education in the tradition of Europe and North America. Regardless of which cult they belong to, they are totally dedicated soldiers who are fearless and well suited to regional conditions. Ithaqua cultists tend to be better equipped, but otherwise are largely the same as their conterparts in the Yig cult. This set of statistics may be used and reused as necessary. As a side note, Yig cultists may be hired as diggers for the Miskatonic expedition in Mérida by Carlos Calderon. If so, they will conform generally to the description of diggers provided previously and thus will not be equipped in any strange manner. Yig cultists who are diggers will also know spoken Yucatec at at least 60% skill.

New for *Call of Cthulhu*

New Creature - The Minions of Ithaqua

To the author's knowledge, the Minions of Ithaqua appear in only one story, *The Burrowers Beneath* by Brian Lumley. They appear only briefly in that story and only in the final violent pages.

The Minions of Ithaqua are air elementals that can be summoned by Ithaqua (or presumably by a worshipper versed in the proper incantations) to do his bidding. In the story, a group is sent by Ithaqua to destroy the house occupied by the heroes, killing them in the process. Never fear, the good guys escaped. Sadly, the same could not be said for the house.

The arrival of a "Minion" (or group of them) is generally accompanied by tremendous howling sufficient to unnerve even the bravest of investigators. As with the Howl of the Wendigo that issues from Ithaqua at times, the howling of the Minions causes 1/1D6 SAN loss. For those unfortunate enough to see one of these fearsome entities, they appear as massive, multi-limbed, semi-insectoid creatures. Limbs are generally tipped with some sort of claw-like pincer, much like

one would expect on a crustacean. A very obvious maw is present, complete with gnashing teeth and mandibles. Worse, the thing can fly, though its actual method of locomotion is not evident. The SAN loss for viewing a Minion is 1/1D10.

The best weapon possessed by these creatures is their ability to control the wind. They use it to batter structures and sweep victims off their feet. Anyone unfortunate enough to get within reach of the creature, within five feet or so, may be subject to one or more claw attacks. A claw that strikes may be able to grasp the victim and one so grasped will surely be drawn into the maw of the beast unless they are assisted by friends or are particularly lucky.

Characteristics	Rolls	Averages
Strength (**STR**)	3D6+6	16 to 17
Dexterity (**DEX**)	2D6+6	13
Intelligence (**INT**)	2D6+6	13
Constitution (**CON**)	3D6+6	16 to 17
Power (**POW**)	4D6	14
Size (**SIZ**)	3D6+12	22 to 23

Sanity (**SAN**) loss: 1/1D10 (plus 1/1D6 for hearing one's howling)

Average Hit Point: 19 to 20

Average Damage Modifier: +1D6

Move: 12 (flying)

Attacks:

Claw 35%, 1D6+dm damage (may attack with up to six claws in a given round and may divide this among multiple targets without penalty)

Grasp 60%, special damage

Armor: two points of chitinous exoskeleton plus takes minimum damage from all physical attacks. Fire, acid, and spells do normal damage. Totally impervious to cold.

Spells: knows one spell for every point of Intelligence (INT) over nine.

Special:

Grasp Attack: The Grasp Attack may only be employed after a Claw Attack is successful. If a victim is successfully grasped, he or she will be hauled into the maw of the creature and shredded by the mandibles and teeth prior to being consumed. The only means of escape, aside from killing the creature, is to break free of its grasp. This requires a successful resolution of a STR versus STR contest on the Resistance Table. The roll may be attempted only once, for the creature will be swift in hauling the victim to its maw, killing the victim nearly instantly. However, only one victim can be eaten every three rounds so if several are grasped, some may have multiple opportunities to break free.

Windstorm: The Minion is generally accompanied by a great windstorm. Its intensity can be controlled at the creature's will and it can be directed to batter structures and people. It can have a STR up to the POW rating of the Minion and a group of Minions may combine their windstorm powers into a collective gale of great intensity. The windstorm requires no expenditure of magic points.

Wind Gust: A controlled wind gust is the primary ranged weapon of the Minion. A gust can be used to knock over trees, people, etc. and can even control the flight path of a loose object such as a tree limb or picnic table. If the wind gust is used, the Minion expends four magic points and the gust has a STR equal to double its POW. Thus, a Minion with a POW rating of 15 can belch forth a 30 STR gust. If it is being used to knock over an investigator, for instance, the victim must win a STR versus SIZ contest on the Resistance Table to be able to stay on his/her feet or maintain any sort of balance. Worse, the gust can direct an object's flight path. The attack percentage for an object so hurled is equal to twice the creature's POW. Damage is dependent on the object hurled plus the damage bonus of the wind's force. The damage bonus is determined by consulting the Damage Bonus table and using STR only as the determining factor instead of the usual (STR+SIZ). For example, a Minion with POW of 15 decides to hurl a broken fencepost at James. The STR of the gust is 30 so the attack percentage is also 30. The Keeper decides that the post does a base 1D10 damage. This is combined with the damage bonus of the STR 30 gust which is +1D4. Thus, if the post strikes, the damage is 1D10+1D4. Note that a wind gust may only hurl objects that can be easily lifted by its strength. A STR 34 gust cannot pick up a truck and toss it across a parking lot, but it might be able to turn a steel hubcap into a deadly projectile. One final note: multiple Minions can combine their wind gust abilities into a single immensely powerful gust capable of uprooting trees and overturning vehicles.

- New Spells -

Contact Minion of Ithaqua

Involving an elaborate ritual, this spell will result in the arrival of one or more of the Minions of Ithaqua. The ritual takes a total of fifteen minutes and requires the sacrifice of a human. The victim does not necessarily have to be willing, but does have to be conscious. The sacrifice results in the swift removal of the heart from the victim. The spell costs four magic points and the Minion will arrive in 1D10 minutes. When cast, the creature will have an 80% chance of appearing. Each witness loses 1/1D8 SAN, 1D3/1D10 if actually involved. The spell may be cast in any remote area, but the Keeper may apply bonuses to the chance of one appearing (or perhaps a reduction in magic points necessary) in certain sacred sites (such as the pyramids of Kukulcán in Chichén Itzá or Mayapán) or at certain special times (such as the winter solstice).

Chill of the Wendigo

This destructive spell may only be used in the northern hemisphere and if it is used south of 12° north latitude, the victim has +10% bonus to his or her resistance roll (however, no scenario in this book takes place south of this latitude). The caster begins by intoning words of power for three rounds. Next, the caster's magic points are pitted against those of the victim on the Resistance Table. If the victim resists, he or she suffers from mild to moderate (but painful) symptoms such as chilblains or minor frostbite. This will reduce the target's DEX by one point until medical treatment is administered. If the victim fails the resistance roll, hypothermia is the result. This causes the temporary loss of 1D4 CON and 1D3 DEX. The loss will kill the victim if it drives one or both statistics to zero or less. If the roll was fumbled, the victim freezes to death in 1D10+1 rounds unless placed in close proximity to a decent heat source for no less than one hour. The caster must be in line of sight to the target and within one hundred yards in order to use this spell. This spell requires the expenditure of four magic points and the loss of 1D4 SAN. Chill of the Wendigo also appears in *Walker in the Wastes*.

Worms

This spell first appeared in a scenario written by Keith Herber entitled "The Condemned" and can be found on page 133 of Chaosium's *Arkham Unveiled*. It is in the arsenal of Carlos Calderon and could potentially be employed by other cult priests of the Keeper's creation. The description here is slightly expanded from the *Arkham Unveiled* version, but is identical in all important respects.

Worms causes thousands of black, wriggling, six inch long roundworms to grow within the victim's digestive system and pour out all orifices. A side effect is to cause the victim to suffocate to death. The spell automatically succeeds against an unconscious or sleeping target though a conscious one is entitled to a POW versus POW contest on the Resistance Table to avoid the effects. If the spell is successful, it is very graphic and disgusting to watch and worse, is impossible to stop.

The caster expends six magic points when using this spell. Worms continue to generate as long as the victim lives and do not go away after death (though they pose no threat to anyone in the vicinity). To determine the amount of time it takes for this spell to kill the victim, use the drowning rules in the *Call of Cthulhu* rulebook.

- New Skills -

Botany and Zoology (base 00%)

These two skills have been carried over from pre-fifth edition rules since they are very appropriate for use in this scenario. Biology is considered a more general skill which encompasses parts of both of these skills plus more knowledge such as microbiology. The author strongly encourages the use of these skills here.

Cartography (base 00%)

An individual with this skill has received formal training in mapmaking and geography. In addition to the obvious ability of reading and making maps, such a person has knowledge of topography, climates, and environments. This skill does not include the practical use of maps for the purposes of navigation (see the skills Land Navigation and Air/Sea Navigation for further).

Forensics (base 00%)

Generally a skill possessed by skilled physicians or perhaps experienced law enforcement officers, Forensics is knowledge of physical evidence at crime scenes, most notably that concerning corpses. The fifth edition *Call of Cthulhu* rules contains an excellent section on forensics that can help enlighten those who purchase this skill.

Land Navigation (base 10%) and Air/Sea Navigation (base 00%)

An important skill whenever one is travelling in the wilderness, knowledge of navigation overland is vital to survival. The description of this skill in the rules provides a very broad interpretation that takes into account many forms of navigation. It is recommended that Keepers divide this into two skills: Land Navigation and Air/Sea Navigation. The former is navigation using a compass, map, pace count, terrain association, etc. while the latter is conducted using a sextant, charts, and similar tools and methods.

PLAYER CHARACTER

PROFESSOR SYDNEY "BOLO" HESTON

Principal investigator of the
Barringer-Boyce Keystone Expedition.

Died July 17th, 1925

"Comrades, I trust we've each held back one round..."

1925

■ New moon
● Full moon
▼ Solstice
▲ Equinox

January

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	●	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	■
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

February

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
●	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
■	23	24	25	26	27	28

March

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	●	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	▲	21
22	23	■	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

April

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	●	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	■	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

May

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					1	2
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TEMPLE OF THE TOAD

Brian Appleton

[Editor's Note: "Temple of the Toad" is based upon the circumstances that happened during Robert E. Howard's "The Thing on the Roof" and is the scenario author's fictional account of what might have occurred subsequently. It should be noted that in the original story the character of Tussmann owned an estate that was located in Sussex. It should also be noted that the part of Conrad Beck is that of the unnamed narrator and houseguest from the original short story. Keepers might want to (re)read this story to get a better understanding.]

Introduction

It is April, 1927, and another semester of classes is nearing a close at [insert a prominent college or university in proximity to Boston]. The Investigators are approached by one of their esteemed colleagues, Professor Conrad Beck, an anthropologist and rare book collector. Professor Beck relates the story of one Stuart Tussmann to them, found on page 187. Following the story, Professor Beck inquires if the Investigators are willing to accompany him in a preliminary search for this temple, the Temple of the Toad, during the summer break. He goes on by saying that if the temple is indeed found that he could probably persuade some university officials to arrange and fund a full fledged expedition to excavate the site.

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Beck's Story of Tussmannn

Beck tells that Tussmam was a well-known adventurer, explorer, and anthropologist of sorts. He relates that Tussmann was exploring in Honduras with five assistants back in 1924 when he ran into some trouble with local bandits. After being shot in the foot, Tussmannn finally managed to flee alone and stumbled briefly upon an ancient temple. Due to the circumstances, he did not have the time that he would have wished to explore the site. After he returned to the States, Tussmann tried to find any and all information regarding this temple in Honduras. He was almost possessed to return to that site and discover its treasures.

Eventually Tussmann found enough facts to rediscover the temple's location, a site he called the Temple of the Toad. In the early summer of 1925, Tussmann decided to return to the temple. What he found was both more and less than what he expected. He didn't find any of the expected treasure he had hoped for -- all he found was something he called the "key" to the temple. This "key" was a repulsive, crimson jewel carved into the form of a toad. It has gone missing since Tussmam's death.

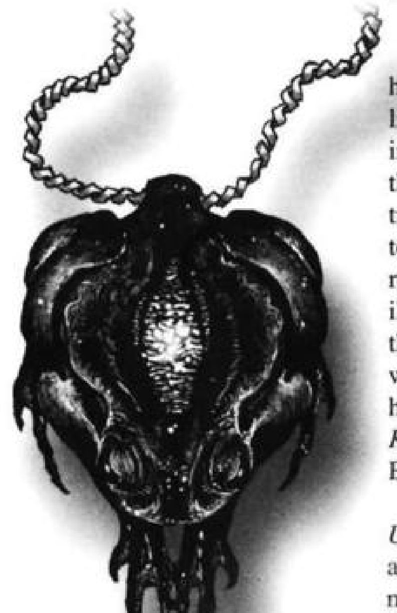
After Tussmann returned home, he was very disappointed due to the fact that he didn't find any great and vast amounts of treasure. But as time passed, he seemed to develop a sort of paranoia about the events that happened in Honduras and questioned why he took the "key." He began to believe that someone or something was going to come after him. This paranoia seemed to increase all the way up to the time of his death.

The True Story of Tussmann

Stuart Tussmann was an adventurer, explorer, and anthropologist of sorts. Tussmann was doing some illicit adventuring in Honduras with five "assistants" back in 1924 when he ran into some trouble with local bandits. After being shot in the foot, Tussmann finally managed to flee alone and stumbled briefly upon an ancient temple. (The five "assistants" were killed while Tussmann was exploring inside the temple). Due to the circumstances, he did not have the time that he would have wished to do the "exploration" of this site. Upon his return to the United States, Tussmann proceeded to try to find any and all relevant information on this temple with designs of returning.

Tussmann found references to the temple in several books including the Golden Goblin edition of *Nameless Cults*. Delving into further research, Tussmann convinced Beck to search for a copy of *Unausprechlichen Kulten* for him and with this copy, received from one Professor James Clement of Richmond, Virginia, Tussmann learned of the location of the temple.

In the early summer of 1925, Tussmann decided to return to the temple. What he found was both more and less than what he expected. He didn't find any of the expected treasure he had hoped for, but what he found was the lair of a Great Old One, Gol-goroth. He escaped from the temple with his life and the "key" to the temple -- a magical, crimson jewel carved into the form of a toad which is the literal key to the underground passage that leads to the lair of Gol-goroth. Yet he did not survive for too long. Gol-goroth reclaimed what belonged to the temple and left Tussmann with a hoofprint through his skull.



Background

Conrad Beck is a noted anthropologist who is in his late 40s and has prematurely graying hair. He published a study entitled "Evidence of Nahua Culture" back in 1923. "Evidence of Nahua Culture" puts forth Beck's theories that there is strong evidence of tenth century A.D. tribes of Nahua stock which moved into the Mayan territory in the Yucatán. Stuart Tussmann originally made strong remarks refuting Beck's claim stating that this theory was illogical and invalid. But Tussmann later publicly retracted these remarks and apologized in *The Scientific News*. (This was mainly due to the fact that Tussmann needed Beck's help to find a copy of the Black Book, or *Unausprechlichen Kulten*, and would do about anything necessary to regain Beck's favor.)

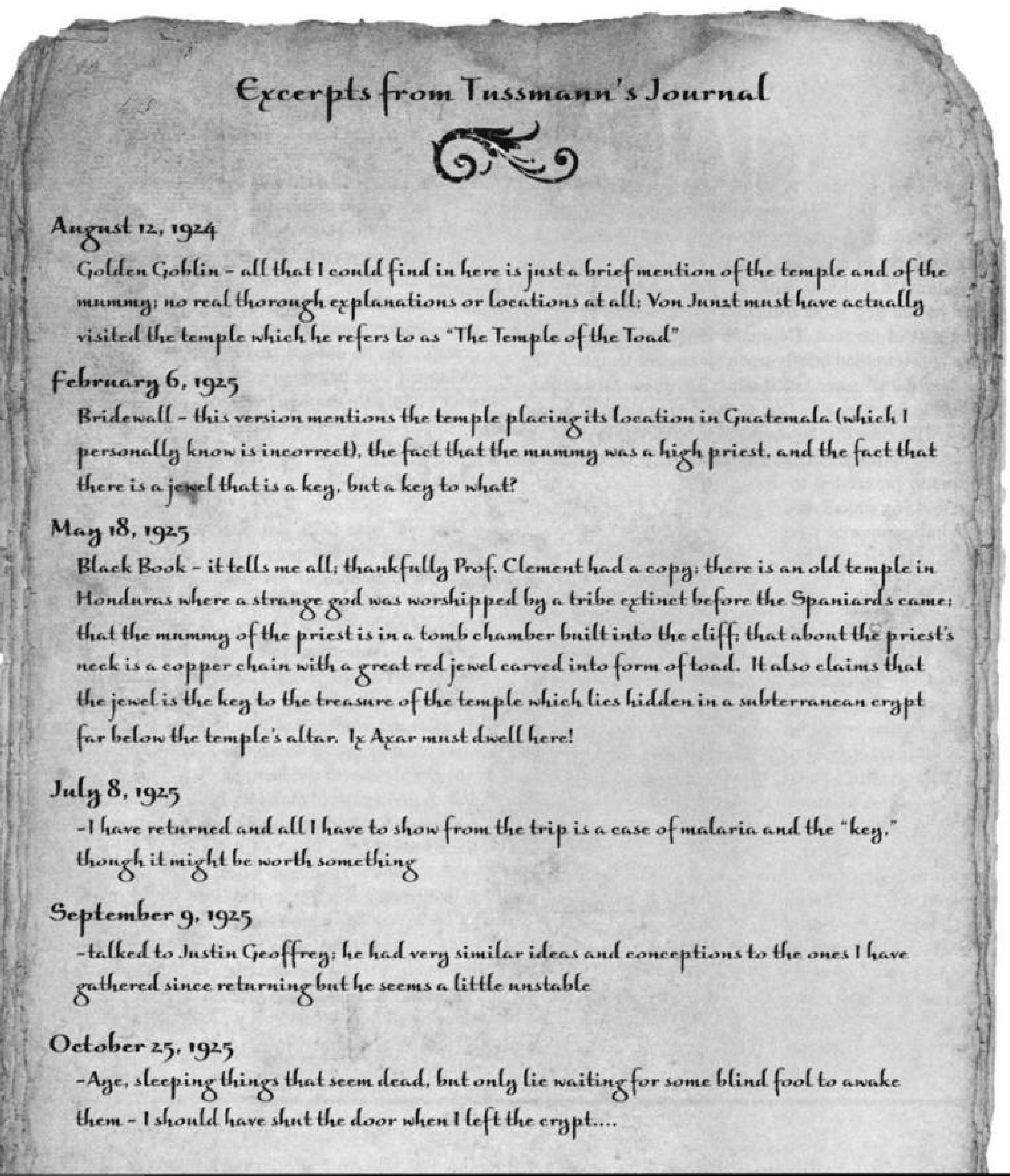
Since Tussmann's death, Conrad Beck has read *Unausprechlichen Kulten* and is no longer just your average anthropologist and avid rare book collector. Beck has made various connections in the copy of *Unausprechlichen Kulten* (originally Tussmann's) which led him on a trip to Stregiocavar, Hungary. There he received dream impressions of Gol-goroth and his worship while in the vicinity of the Black Stone. These dreams continued and have driven him over the edge and into the realm of worship of this Great Old One. Now Beck seeks the Investigators to be assistants (and possible victims) and accompany him to Honduras to find the Temple of the Toad.

Also, it is known to Beck through his dream impressions with Gol-goroth that when he journeys to the Temple of the Toad, he will meet with Itzamná, a Serpent Man masquerading as the Caucasian shaman of the temple, along with the degenerate Serpent Men hybrids that still dwell around the site.

Preliminary Investigation

Conrad Beck is now the trustee of Tussmann's estate and has access to his journal, notes, and library. Beck will suggest that he and the Investigators study Tussmann's personal affects to deduce any clues that will lead them to the temple. Amongst Tussmann's belongings are the following:

1) The first item is Tussmann's journal (see below). It should take approximately a day to thoroughly study this journal.



Excerpts from Tussmann's Journal

August 12, 1924

Golden Goblin - all that I could find in here is just a brief mention of the temple and of the mummy; no real thorough explanations or locations at all; Von Junzt must have actually visited the temple which he refers to as "The Temple of the Toad"

February 6, 1925

Bridewall - this version mentions the temple placing its location in Guatemala (which I personally know is incorrect), the fact that the mummy was a high priest, and the fact that there is a jewel that is a key, but a key to what?

May 18, 1925

Black Book - it tells me all; thankfully Prof. Clement had a copy; there is an old temple in Honduras where a strange god was worshipped by a tribe extinct before the Spaniards came; that the mummy of the priest is in a tomb chamber built into the cliff; that about the priest's neck is a copper chain with a great red jewel carved into form of toad. It also claims that the jewel is the key to the treasure of the temple which lies hidden in a subterranean crypt far below the temple's altar. Ix Axar must dwell here!

July 8, 1925

-I have returned and all I have to show from the trip is a case of malaria and the "key," though it might be worth something

September 9, 1925

-talked to Justin Geoffrey; he had very similar ideas and conceptions to the ones I have gathered since returning but he seems a little unstable

October 25, 1925

-Aye, sleeping things that seem dead, but only lie waiting for some blind fool to awake them - I should have shut the door when I left the crypt....

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2) The second is *People of the Monolith.* It was written by Justin Geoffrey in English in 1926. This collection of poetry conveys SAN loss of 1/1D3, Cthulhu Mythos +3%, and no spells. It is detailed below in the section entitled "Further Investigation."

3) The third item is a file of several pads of paper with various transcribed runes and glyphs along with several charcoal rubbings. With a successful Idea roll one can determine that the charcoal rubbings seem to match up with several of the glyphs. The runes and glyphs are curvilinear figures roughly cuneiformic in shape.

4) The next item is a map of Honduras and the surrounding countries (see map below). This is a general geographic map with that contains few details other than large cities and major geographic features such as large rivers.

5) A more detailed map of the interior of Honduras showing the approximate location of the Temple of the Toad (see map page 190) is the next item. The map shows the location of three villages Tussmann must have encountered enroute, a mountain named Cerro del Fuego ("mountain of fire"), and the alleged location of the Temple of the Toad. With a successful Library Use roll, research into Cerro del Fuego will determine that it is a local extinct volcano.

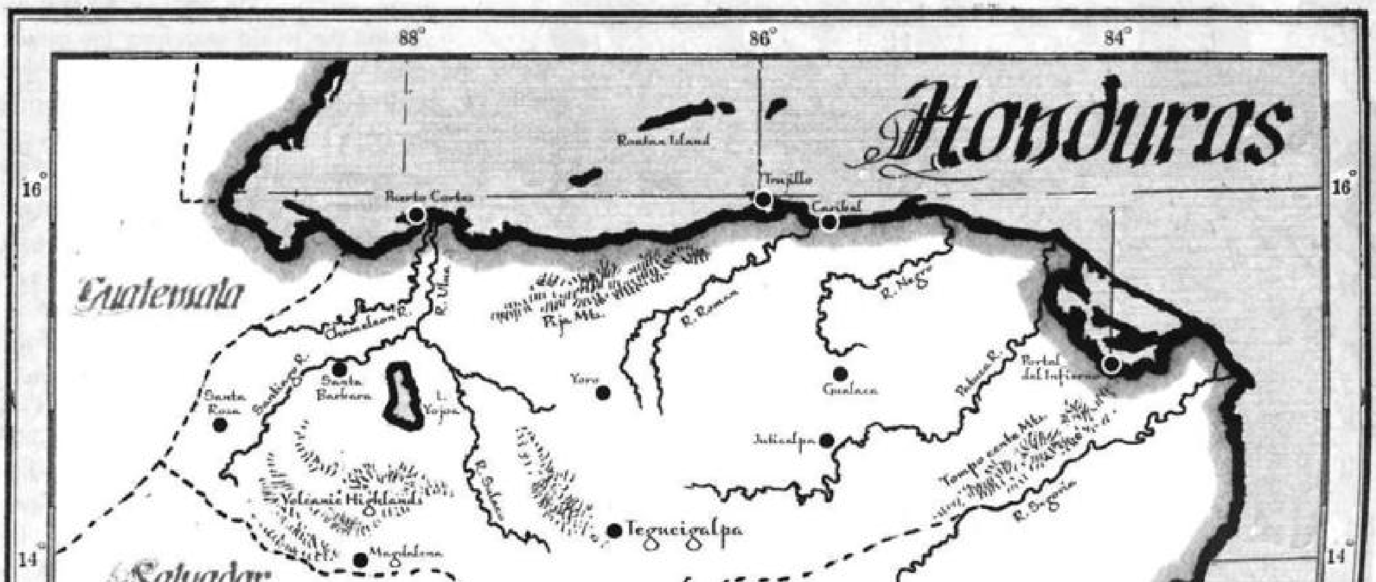
6) The sixth item is the journal of Juan Gonzalles (written in Spanish, +1% History, 5 hours reading time). It tells of his partial exploration in 1793 of Honduras, briefly mentioning a curious temple that differed slightly than most Indian ruins. It also states that the Indians claimed that there is "something unusual" hidden under the temple.

7) The next item is *The Handbook of Honduras* by Alexander Hazzard (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1918). This is a general purpose guidebook detailing the history, culture, social status, geography, and climate of Honduras.

8) The final item is *Flora and Fauna of Central America* by William Krough (University of Virginia Press, 1919). This is a specific guidebook detailing the animal- and plant-life indigenous to Central America.

Further Investigation

Investigators might want to further delve for clues from various references mentioned within Tussmann's journal. The following is information that can discovered on the various topics.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R. Roman
R. Negro
Santa Rosa
Santiago R.
Santa Barbara
L. Yojoa
Yoro
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Patuca R.
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Juticalpa
Volcanic Highlands
R. Sulaco
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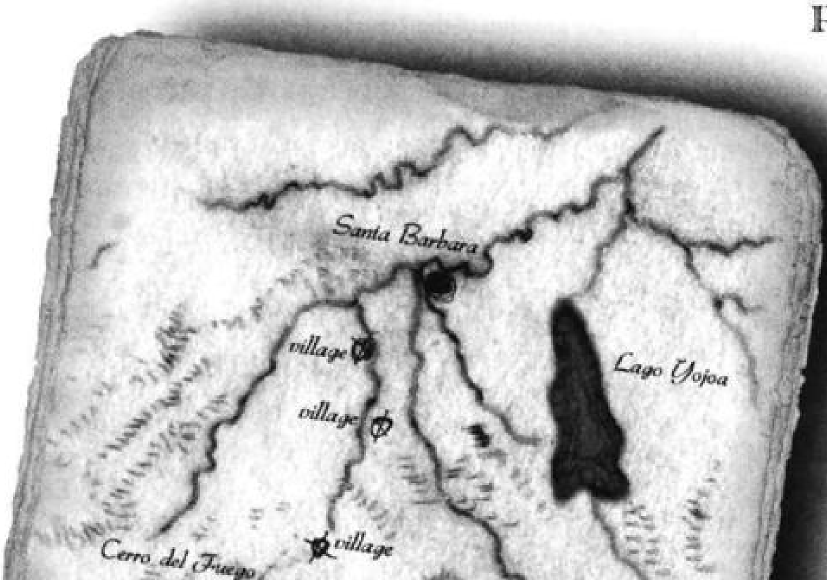
Copyright Reinholde Cartographics

Stuart Tussmann

As mentioned previously, Stuart Tussmann was an adventurer, explorer, and anthropologist of sorts. He sometimes published cases and studies based upon his explorations in minor field journals and occasionally *The Scientific News*. Tussmann was a wealthy individual who could afford to finance his own adventures. Tussmann also owned a quite large estate of which Conrad Beck is now the executor. See page 191 for a biographical clipping. Adjust the source of the clipping as needed.



Professor Clement

Any Investigator who is a professor of Occult studies or Anthropology will recognize the name of Professor James Clement as a professor of Anthropology and Occult Studies who taught at the University of Virginia. Professor Clement had a reputation for being able to locate impossibly difficult to find books or items when sought after. Unfortunately, Professor Clement died of a stroke two years ago.

Von Junzt

A successful Occult roll will reveal that Friedrich Wilhelm Von Junzt was a noted German occultist born in Cologne in 1795. He spent most of his life travelling around the world searching for ancient tomes and secret cults. He published his Black Book in 1839 detailing the knowledge he had gained through his ventures abroad. In 1840, he was found murdered in his locked study with both his new manuscript and throat ripped to shreds.

The Various Forms of *Unausprechlich Kulten*

Unausprechlich Kulten, the Black Book, *Nameless Cults* - these are several titles all referring to the blasphemous work created by Friedrich Wilhelm Von Junzt. A successful Cthulhu Mythos roll or Occult roll will determine the following information.

The original German quarto edition was printed in 1839. It is said that only six copies are known to exist, all thought to be held by major libraries. There are rumors that there are a few copies lurking in privately held collections. The original editions also contain truly fine yet horrific engravings by the German artist Gunther Hasse.

The Black Book was pirated, printed, and published as the Bridewall edition entitled *Nameless Cults* in 1845 in London. This edition is a cheap, leather-bound octavo filled with cramped text and a huge number of typographical errors. There are known to be at least twenty copies in existence, with many others probably in private collections.

In 1909, Golden Goblin published their own edition in New York. This edition censors many of the horrific details contained in the earlier editions. This book is only two-thirds the size of the Bridewall edition. As much as one-fourth of the original text has been expurgated. The book is beautifully bound and decorated with the exquisite and bizarre illustrations of Diego Vasquez.

Ix Axar (Ixaxar)

If Investigators are concentrating upon Mesoamerican, or specifically Mayan research, they will most likely falsely attribute this name to a Mayan god or goddess, similar to Ix Chel, goddess of the moon and patron of women in childbirth, or Ix Tab, goddess of suicides, with a successful Anthropology, Archaeology, or History roll. However, with a

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successful Occult and/or Cthulhu Mythos roll, they will correctly attribute the name to Ixaxar (pronounced "Ishakshar") - the Sixtystone - Hexecontalithos. The Ixaxar is also known as the "Black Stone" and is believed to be a stone or obelisk containing sixty curvilinear figures or hieroglyphs roughly cuneiformic in nature. A successful Cthulhu Mythos roll will attribute Ixaxar to the worship of Gol-goroth, and it is further believed that there may be several of these scattered around the globe in such places as Honduras, Hungary, Libya, and the Yucatán Peninsula in Mexico.

Further research will reveal, with a successful Library Use roll at a major library, a passage from the Roman treatise entitled "The Wonders of the People That Inhabit the Inner Parts of Libya, and Of the Stone Called Sixtystone" -

> *"They hiss rather than speak,*
> *their voices are harsh,*
> *and not to be heard without fear."*

This passage is a portent of things to come...

Justin Geoffrey / *People of the Monolith*

Investigations made into Justin Geoffrey will only be successful if the Investigator is an avid collector / reader of occult poetry and can succeed in either a Cthulhu Mythos roll, Art: Poetry roll, or one-fifth of an Occult roll. Success will allow the Investigator to know that Justin Geoffrey is the pseudonym of John Ernest Tyler who was born in western Texas in 1898. He is an acquaintance of the poet Edward Pickman Derby and penned the collection of poems entitled *People of the Monolith* after a trip to Hungary. Further investigation might lead to the fact that Justin Geoffrey is currently confined to the Illinois State Asylum.

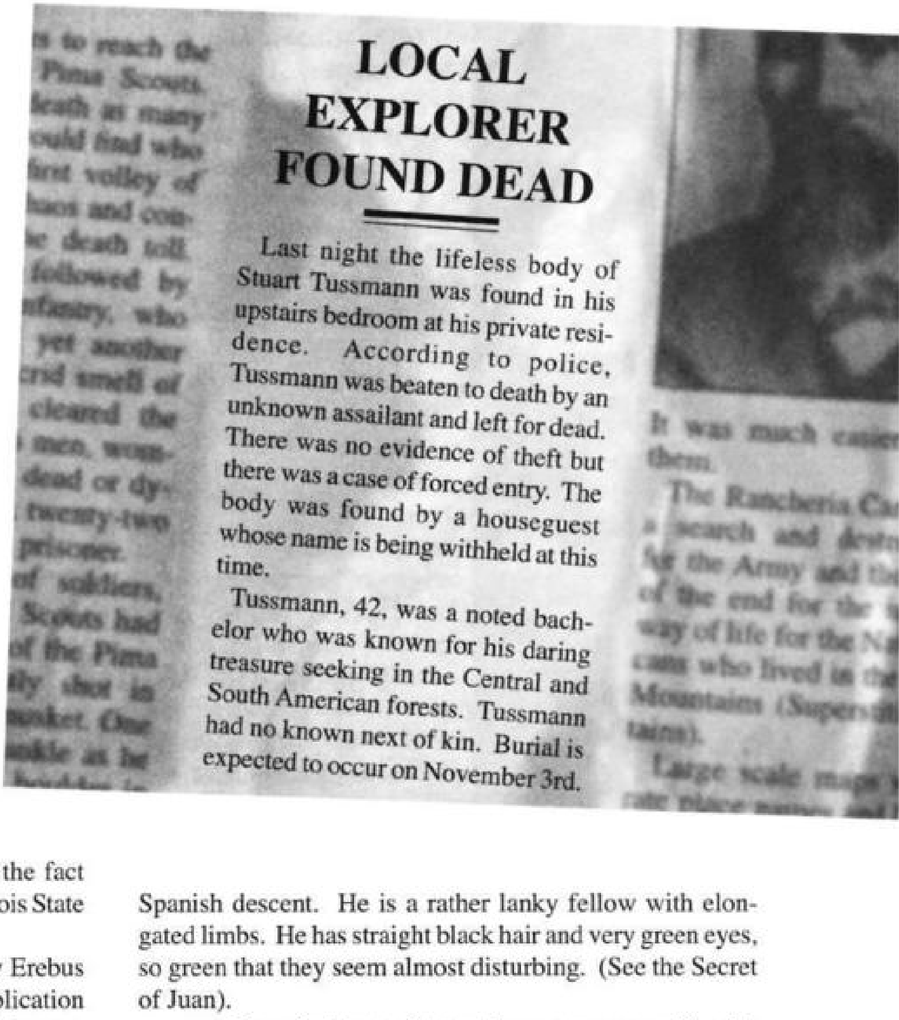
People of the Monolith was published by Erebus Press of Monmouth, Illinois in 1926. It had a publication of 1200 copies bound in a bright red buckram. The contents of the collection include the title poem, "Dark Desires," "Star Beast," and "Strutter in Darkness."

Honduras

Information on Honduras can be gathered by the Investigators in a multitude of ways including perusing handbooks, encyclopedias, or *National Geographics*. Use the information found in the section on Honduras in the sourcebook section, or use real-life props such as handbooks or encyclopedias from the time period.

On to a Banana Republic

Passage to Honduras is easy to arrange due to the large number of freighters that travel there to ship exports for the fruit companies. Passage will be on the *Friemont* from Boston and will take approximately six days to reach Puerto Cortes, Honduras. Here the group will be met by the guide that Beck has arranged for them, Juan Vilheila-Pereira. Juan is a young man in his late 20s of obvious Spanish descent. He is a rather lanky fellow with elongated limbs. He has straight black hair and very green eyes, so green that they seem almost disturbing. (See the Secret of Juan).



LOCAL EXPLORER FOUND DEAD

Last night the lifeless body of Stuart Tussmann was found in his upstairs bedroom at his private residence. According to police, Tussmann was beaten to death by an unknown assailant and left for dead. There was no evidence of theft but there was a case of forced entry. The body was found by a houseguest whose name is being withheld at this time.

Tussmann, 42, was a noted bachelor who was known for his daring treasure seeking in the Central and South American forests. Tussmann had no known next of kin. Burial is expected to occur on November 3rd.

Here in Puerto Cortes the group can outfit with any last minute gear they think they need. If the Investigators think they are going to get any last minute research done here though, they are wrong. Puerto Cortes possesses a population of around 4000 people. Its principle function is the export of the native produce. Beck will explain that they will be taking a train south on to Santa Barbara and once there, he will have Juan arrange for a few pack mules.

Via Packmule to Meet the Residents

Once the Investigators reach Santa Barbara, a town of approximately 8000 residents, they will realize that the

only method to proceed further into the interior is to travel overland on foot. The best method is to employ several packmules to carry the limited amounts of supplies. Juan, as already stated, will arrange for these. Along the way, as marked upon the map (Player Aid #4), the Investigators will encounter three separate villages, each comprised of a different type of inhabitant.

The First Village

After the first two days of travel (with a successful Land Navigation roll, otherwise it takes three), the Investigators come across the first village marked on the map. This village is composed of poor tenant farmers of mixed Indian and Spanish ancestry. The villagers work for local landowners which in turn are suppliers for the United Fruit Company. The local villagers are clueless concerning questions asked about a lost treasure or the Temple of the Toad. Questions asked about Ixaxar receive the response that it may be a corruption of a long forgotten goddess' name just as some of the other goddesses are named Ix Chel or Ix Tab. Questions about Tussmann result in several of the villagers remembering a strange white man who passed through here asking questions similar to the Investigators'.

Note to Keeper

The Keeper should keep carefully track of the days and adjust certain situations to ensure that the group arrives on or the day before Midsummer's Night, the night of June 21st. This is essential in order for Beck to conduct the Ritual of Summoning.

The Second Village

After a similar travelling experience as it took to reach the first village, the Investigators arrive at the second village marked on the map. This second village is composed mainly of the descendants of the Chorti Maya who have abandoned most of their traditional ways. Inquiries about the temple or treasure are met by responses that there is a temple that lies further into the mountains to the southwest. It is believed that the temple was built before their forefathers came to this land. There is a legend that Gucumotz may have built the temple. The legend also tells that the priest of the temple was said to be a white man. (Remember the legend that Gucumotz / Kukulcán / Quetzalcóatl was claimed to be a white man.)

The village elder will warn of the "small ones" who dwell within the forest, but he will not elaborate on this point. If questioned about Ixaxar, he will say that Ixaxar is the name given to the altar of evil, a place of worship for the "small ones."

The Final Village - Tribe of the Cayman

The final village that the Investigators arrive at is the village of the Tribe of the Cayman. The tribe still worship Itzamná secretly. They are led by their village chief, Pacal. He has almond-colored eyes which secretly mark his ancestral linkage to the Serpent Men. At all times he conveys a regal stance about him and is extremely proud of his heritage (although he will not mention anything about it.) If asked about his eyes, he will only respond that it is a sign of the royal family passed through generations.

The head shaman, whose name is Ahpo, wears a cayman headdress and other

The Secret of Juan

Investigators who have gone through Chaosium's "The Secret of Castronegro" may be extremely disturbed by the appearance of Juan and for good reason. Juan is of the same clan of Vilheila-Pereiras that live in Castronegro. He is also one of the artifact procurers for Filipo Diaz, owner of the occult shop named The Tomb in Castronegro. Beck has promised Juan a share of any occult artifacts found if Juan acts as a guide through the wilderness. Juan is not beyond stabbing anyone in the back if necessary and will try to abscond secretly away with anything valuable. Too bad Juan may be one of the sacrifices that Beck will use in the end.

accoutrements fitting to his station. Ahpo is the shaman and spiritual leader of the Tribe of the Cayman. He is descended from a long line of shamans which have continuously served the tribe. Ahpo believes that the slumbering priest of the temple is an incarnation of both Itzamná and Gucumotz.

At the first chance available, Beck speaks in private with Pacal and Ahpo, sharing his visions of the Midsummer's Night Eve to come. They readily agree to help Beck in his venture. Each holds it as a great honor to help Itzamná and the other Serpent Men. They will offer whatever aid they can to bring back the glory of Itzamná and the temple.

The Investigators will receive valuable information from Ahpo. First, he can give excellent directions to the temple. If asked about Ixaxar, he will reveal that it is the Black Stone that lies at the temple. If asked specifically about the temple, he will say that it was once a place of worship of Itzamná (this is partially true).

Investigators may notice some runes and glyphs on various objects in the village. A successful Cthulhu Mythos roll or a successful Idea roll by one who has looked through The Black Book in any of its incarnations will reveal the runes to be associated with the Black Stone. If asked about these, the villagers will claim that they are various designs copied by their ancestors.

On to the Temple

The trip between the village of the Tribe of the Cayman and the Temple of the Toad takes approximately two or three days. But depending upon the Keeper, this stretch of the journey should become the most interesting and mysterious thus far. At various points during the trip, the Investigators will find small altars made of stone and twigs bult in the forest. The altars are nothing elaborate, only carefully arranged as to not be made by chance.

At other times, the Investigators may catch a bit of movement out of the corner of their eye during the day, or the sound of strange noises of movement at night. These are the Children of the Dark, the diminutive Serpent Men hybrids, moving about the forest. There should be no encounter with them at this time. The Keeper should play up the suspense to full effect through the entire last leg of the journey.

The Temple

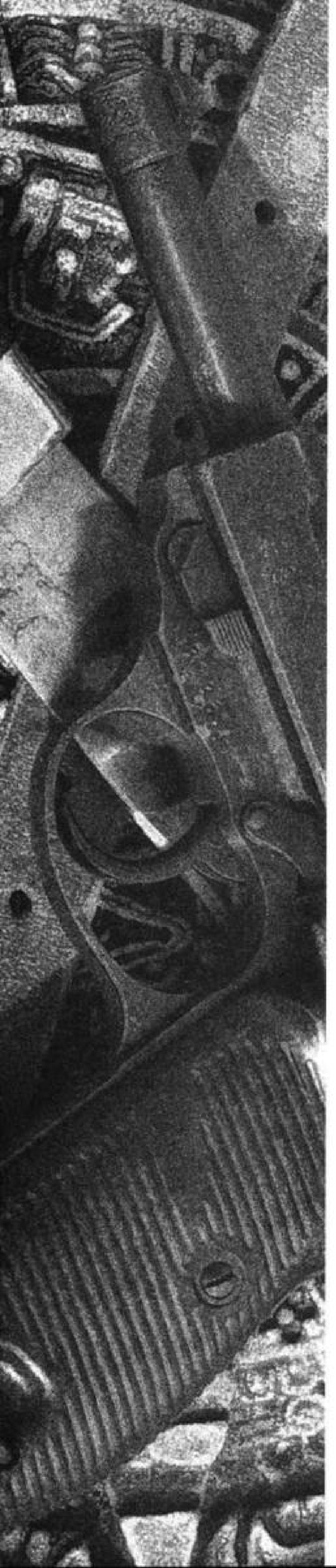
Two or three days travel southwest near the extinct volcano, Cerro del Fuego, lies the location of the Temple of the Toad. It is located through a dense growth of forest in a deserted valley. The valley opens into a wide glade centered on top of a plateau. The temple is built against a sheer stone cliff. The temple is built on two levels with the bottom section mainly being an entry area which proceeds to a set of stairs that lead up the cliffside to the main chamber area. The temple is built with an unusually hard basalt, and its extreme weathering suggests an incredible age. A successful Archaeology roll will lead the Investigator to believe that the structure is pre-Maya architecture, but definitely of a Mesoamerican style.

Outside the main entry area off to the left is an overgrown cenote. The cenote is completely dried up and has vegetation growing inside of it. It is approximately thirty feet deep and can be easily climbed down into if the group has the appropriate gear. The main thing of interest to be found at the bottom of the cenote are the skeletal remains of Tussmann's five assistants that supposedly abandoned him while he was inside. All that remains are bits of clothing that have decayed for the past several years. Examination of the skeletons will obviously reveal that the men were killed from stabbing wounds due to the marks on the bones. A successful Forensics or Anthropology roll will cause the Investigator to conclude that some appear to be "knife-like" wounds either from a knife or a spear.

The entry area to the temple is largely composed of broken and ruined columns. Within the entry is the Black Stone, a stone that is octagonal in shape, 16' high, a foot and half thick, with strange glyphs vaguely cuneiformic in shape covering it. Past the entry area are a set of stairs that lead into the main chamber.

The outer walls of the main temple are crumbling, but the inner walls and columns which support the roof are largely intact. On the outer facade of the temple, about ten feet up, is a recessed area with contains a stylized statue of a large toad or frog with vague swirling patterns around the mouth. The rear legs of the statue appear to be defaced as well. A successful Cthulhu Mythos roll will believe that this is a statue of a Servitor of the Outer Gods. If the Cthulhu Mythos roll was rolled at half of the skill or less, the Investigator might draw a correlation to Gol-goroth, the god of the Black Stone.

The main chamber of the temple is a largely cir-



cular room. Its floor is composed of huge squares of stone. An altar made of round symmetrical stone of the same composition as the floor stands in the rear, center of the chamber. The altar has a depression in it that appears to be the outline of a toad. There are also two large, supported cauldrons of black, oily substance next to altar. (The black, oily substance is just crude oil, but this may give experienced Investigators a sense of dread that it could actually be Formless Spawns lying in wait).

Behind the altar is a small, sealed entrance that leads back into the mummy's chamber. Above the entrance is a Mayan glyph. With a successful Occult, Archaeology, or Anthropology roll, one can determine that this glyph represents the god Itzamná. (See the sidebar for information about Itzamná). The entrance can be easily entered by rolling a large boulder out of the way, as long as up to three Investigators with a combined STR of 25 or more attempt this feat.

The Tomb of Itzamná

Immediately upon opening the entrance, the Investigators will notice a thin, vaporlike fog emanating from the tomb. They need not worry for the vapors are not poisonous, but this should definitely make them cautious, if not paranoid. Within the tomb is a perfectly preserved body on a burial slab regaled in shamanistic garb. Any Investigator that has a Anthropology skill of at least 25% will immediately notice that the shaman is of Caucasian descent, not a native Indian. Around the neck of the shaman is a copper chain, and about that chain is a great red jewel in the shape of a toad. This is the key which Tussmann wrote about and brought back from Honduras.

Unknown to the Investigators, the figure is actually a Serpent Man in the guise of a Mayan shaman masquerading as the god Itzamná. The Serpent Man is held in suspended animation by the vapors that are bellowing through small holes in the floor. As the vapors clear out from the room, Itzamná will slowly begin to awake. He will take no action while the Investigators are in the chamber, but will exit the chamber after they have left. Itzamná will then begin to attempt to find victims for his god, Gol-goroth. If possible, Itzamná will meet up with Beck to plot the ceremonies for Midsummer's Night.

The Altar's Depression

The Investigators most likely will return to the altar, especially if they have already noticed the depression in it. If they place the "key" within the depression, it will suddenly begin to glow crimson and after several seconds, the altar will slide to one side revealing a opening in the floor. The altar will stay in place for a day if the "key" is removed, but after this time will slide back into position.

Going Down

Opening the secret door under the altar reveals a narrow passage of stairs leading down into the darkness. The steps themselves are very narrow as if they were made for the feet of infants. Investigators descending need to make a DEXx5 roll in order to avoid rolling down the stairs and inflicting 1D4 damage to themselves from the fall. At the base of the stairs, which descend approximately twenty feet from the main floor of the temple, is a long winding tunnel. The entire surface of the tunnel's floor is filled with a foggy mist similar to the one found in Itzamná's tomb. The mist perhaps rises two feet above the ground. With a Geology roll or an INTx3 roll, the investigator will realize that he is in a lava tube. Travel into the lava tube will reveal numerous small side passages (these are too small for a human but are sometimes traversed by the degenerate Serpent People).

Travel through the tunnel will reveal another presence. As the Investigators

Itzamná

Some sources tell us that the supreme deity of the Maya was Hunab Ku while others tell us that it was Itzamná. They are possibly one in the same though some references are made to Itzamná being the son of Hunab Ku. Itzamná was looked upon as bei the creator of human life, the inventor of writing, and the patron of science. He appears to be the chief patron of the ruling elite for th symbols of office depict two-headed serpents representing him. He often appears as an aged man with toothless jaws and hollowed cheeks but elsewhere he is depicted as having unmistakable reptilian traits. It was said that he could appear as a crocodile or as a m with the antlers or hooves of a deer. The name Itzamná literally means "iguana house" or "lizard's house."

He was also associated with the Bacabes, or acantuns, the Maya spirits or demons (four in number) associated with religious traditions concerning the cardinal points of the earth. The four Serpent Men in suspended animation below the temple where consider by the natives as the acantuns.

play their light source up ahead of them, they will soon notice a small toad that, try as they might, always stays hopping just beyond the circle of illumination. SAN loss for this small spiritual or spectral toad is 0/1.

After about a hundred yards of travel, the Investigators will come upon a series of four alcoves. Within each of these alcoves is the inanimate body of a resting Serpent Man. Each is in a form of suspended animation similar to Itzamná. There is no ordinary means of detecting if they are living except to do something drastic such as cut them to see if they bleed. The Serpent Men will remain inanimate unless either the Investigators do something to arouse them such as make loud noises or physically bother them, or if Itzamná comes and awakens them. If awakened the Serpent Men will use every means in their power to eliminate the intruders.

Past the alcoves of the sleeping Serpent Men, the passage continues for another hundred yards and finally leads to a solid wooden door which has a now familiar impression of a toad imbedded into it. Placing the "key" into the depression results in the key holding in place, while it glows crimson and the door opens.

Beyond the Doorway

Passing through the doorway leads into a vast open cavern that is in pitch-black darkness. There appears to be no ceiling or sides to this cavern. SAN loss of 0/1. The entire area is filled with a thin fog similar to the one found in the priest's burial chamber.

Approximately ten feet into the room, directly in front of the doorway is what appears to be an enormous statue of a gigantic toad with tentacles around the mouth and hooves on the hind legs. Close examination reveals that the fog is emanating from the nostrils of the toad. There is also an unpleasant dampness about the surface of the statue. SAN loss should be 1/1D4. The statue is actually the inanimate form of Gol-Goroth, his breath coming from his body causing the fog. Only the loudest of noises or the hardest of physical hits will awaken the sleeping god before the Ritual of Summoning.

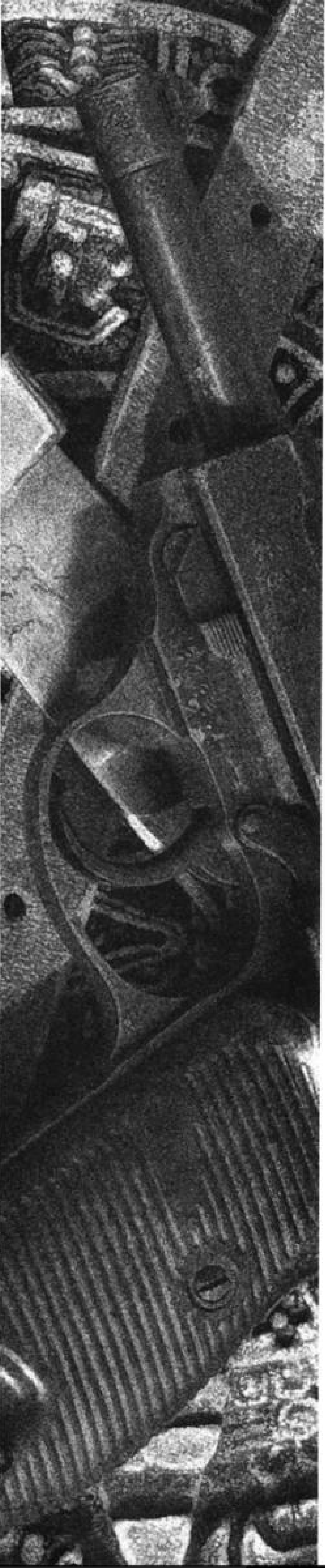
The Ritual of Summoning

If Beck's schemes have progressed as he has planned, he will proceed to undertake the Ritual of Summoning Gol-goroth on Midsummer's Night. The ritual consists of a large crowd of strange people grouped around the Black Stone. There are several natives from the Tribe of the Cayman, including both Pacal and Ahpo, but most of the participants are of a shorter, more squat race with low brows and broad faces along with strangely serpentine features. These are the degenerate, diminutive Serpent Men hybrids. Beck stands before the group arrayed in goatskin

The Key to the Temple of the Toad

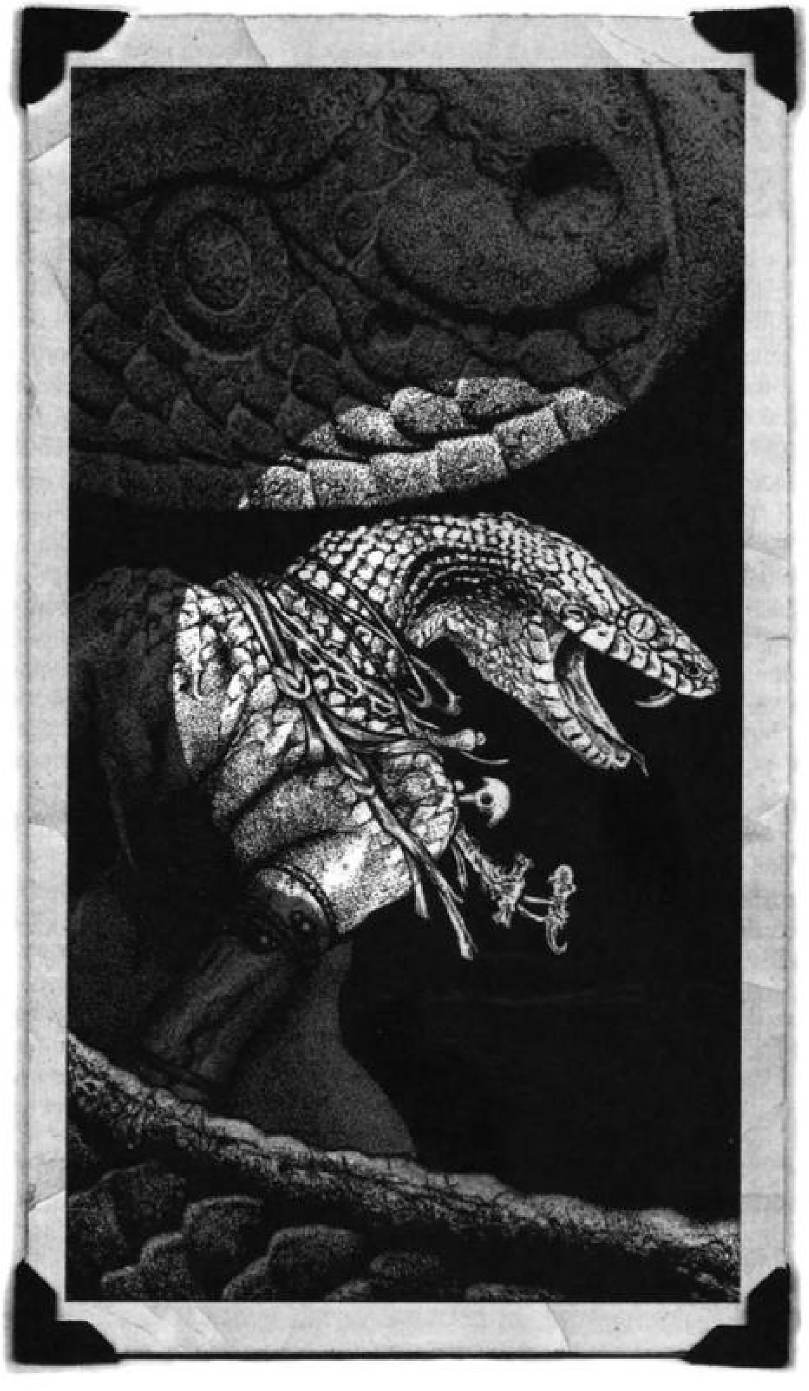
The "key" is a great jewel that is made of a clear and transparent crimson-colored crystal carved into the shape of a toad: the toad is carved as to appear very repulsive and the whole jewel is supported by a heavy wrought copper chain. The chain also possesses strange hieroglyphs engraved upon it similar to the ones that are etched upon the Black Stone.

The necklace is the key that opens the entrance in the altar that leads to the hidden subterranean passage. It is also the key to the wooden door at the end of the underground passage. Placing the key into one of the depressions at either place will cause the "key" to glow crimson, and after a few seconds, the entrance will open.



The Trick to Opening the Doors

The only way to have the altar stone trap door open and the wooden door open at the same time is to first open the altar trap door. When the altar door is open, one can then remove the "key" and take it down to the wooden door to open it.



with a wolf's head mask. Off to one side is an old hag beating rhythm for the ritual on a black drum. Bound to Black Stone is a young naked girl, Juan Vilheila-Pereira, and any unfortunate Investigators who have been captured either by Beck or Itzamná. Also, next to the stone on the ground is a few month-old infant. Around the monolith are several bonfires and before it is a brazier which billows out a vile, nauseous yellow smoke (similar to the smoke in Gol-goroth's chamber).

The ritual progresses with the old hag beating on the drum. The entire throng commences with a variety of wild dancing, chanting, flagellation, and orgy. Beck proceeds to lash the young girl with a bundle of branches until she is covered with an abundance of bleeding wounds. Beck then takes the infant and sacrifices it by bashing it against the Black Stone and then placing its dead body in the brazier. After a few minutes, the yellow smoke will suddenly thicken about the monolith and Gol-goroth will appear clinging to the top of the Black Stone. At this time, the girl, Juan, and any others that are so lucky are offered as tribute to the God of the Black Stone.

Aftermath

Hopefully, the Investigators will figure some way to disrupt or halt the Ritual of Summoning. If not, they will probably be sacrificed to Gol-goroth or else are fleeing for their lives into the jungle. In either case, once they have left the area of the Temple of the Toad, hopefully they have left the "key" behind. If not, the investigator with the "key" will eventually meet the same fate of having a hoofprint crushed into his head just like Tussmann did as Gol-goroth will track him down in order to recover its treasure.

Investigations into Beck once the Investigators return to civilization will turn up nothing about his cult involvement. He has left behind no hidden diaries, no hidden agendas - he even went as far as to place his copy of *Unausprechlichen Kulten* in a bank safe deposit box with instructions to his attorney in the event of his demise. In no event will the Investigators be granted legal access to this.

SAN
Rewards & Penalties

Action	Result
Stop the Ritual of Summoning	+1D8 SAN
Fail to stop the Ritual of Summoning	-1D8 SAN
Beck is slain	+1D3 SAN
Itzamná is eliminated	+1D6 SAN
Young girl is sacrificed	-1D6 SAN
Each Investigator that is sacrificed	-1D6 SAN

NPCs

GOL-GOROTH
The God of the Black Stone

STR 50 **CON** 65 **SIZ** 45 **INT** 17 **POW** 30 **DEX** 15 **Move** 6/9 stalking

Damage Modifier: +6D6

Attacks: 1D4 Tentacles 45%, 3D6 damage each
Hoof 50%, 3D6+dm damage
Bite 30%, 1D6+dm damage

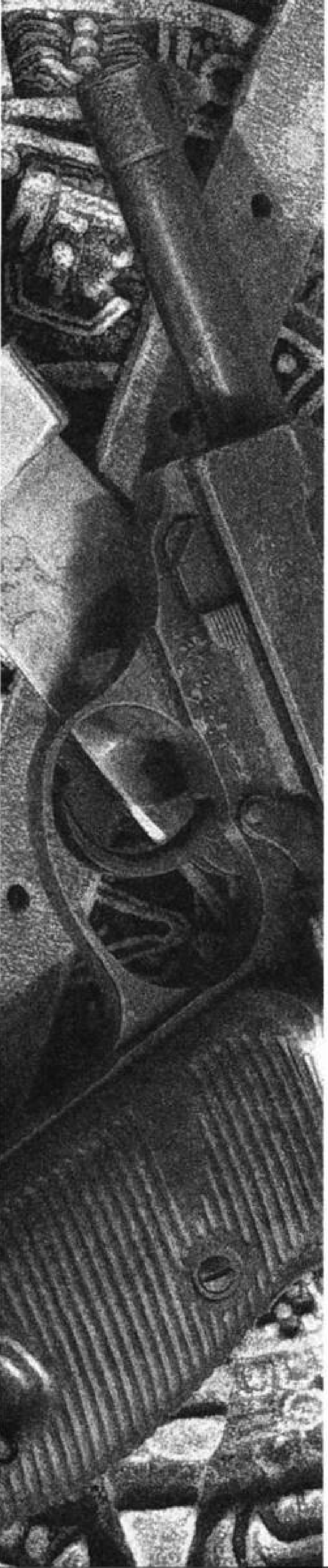
Armor: Due to Gol-goroth's non-terrene nature, all physical attacks do only minimum damage; Gol-goroth cannot be impaled. The Great Old One is immune to cold damage but is otherwise affected by magic.

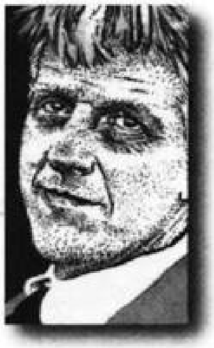
Spells: Create Gate, plus those dealing with subterranean dwelling races and entities

Sanity Loss: 1D4/2D8 Sanity points to see Gol-goroth

Notes: Gol-goroth resembles a huge, slobbering toad with a slimy, scaly hide and a fanged mouth. It has several long snaky tentacles dangling from its neck and shoulders instead of arms. Its hindquarters end in hooves instead of the expected toadlegs. Gol-goroth usually squats or crawls but can move upright for brief intervals.

In combat, each round Gol-goroth can either make 1D4 tentacle attacks, one trample with a hoof, or one bite. A victim grasped by a tentacle is automatically bitten the next round unless his player rolls STRx1 or less on D100 to escape Gol-goroth's grasp.





Conrad Beck, colleague and cultist

STR 13 **CON** 15 **SIZ** 12 **DEX** 10 **APP** 12
INT 15 **POW** 17 **EDU** 19 **SAN** 0 **HP** 14

Damage Modifier: +1D4

Skills: Accounting 22%, Anthropology 65%, Art: Rare Book Collecting 72%, Climb 42%, Cthulhu Mythos 25%, Drive Automobile 27%, History 50%, Jump 31%, Library Use 72%, Listen 44%, Occult 47%, Spot Hidden 50%, Persuade 45%, Spot Hidden 48%, Zoology 6%

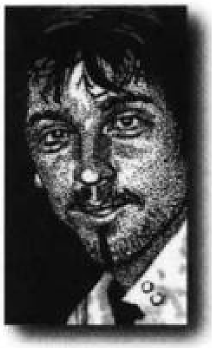
Languages: English 95%, German 75%, Nahuatl 60%, Spanish 80%, Yucatec 70%

Attacks: Handgun 35%, 1D10 damage (.38 revolver)

Spells: Call/Dismiss Gol-goroth (Ritual of Summoning)*, Contact Brother (Ghoul), Dominate, Summon/Bind Byakhee

Notes: Beck has become a worshipper of Gol-goroth since the incident that happened to Tussmann. He has now arranged to lead the Investigators to the Temple of the Toad and offer them and any other unfortunates as offerings to his god on Midsummer's Night using the Ritual of Summoning.* Beck carries his ritual gear of the wolf's head mantle and goatskins carefully concealed within his personal gear.

*New Spell



Juan Vilheila-Pereira, guide to paths astray

STR 11 **CON** 14 **SIZ** 10 **DEX** 15 **APP** 9
INT 10 **POW** 11 **EDU** 10 **SAN** 0 **HP** 12

Damage Modifier: +0

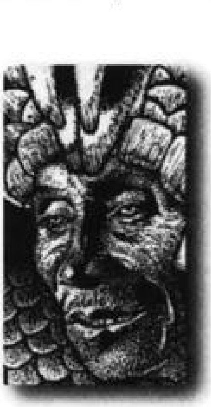
Skills: Archaeology 11%, Art Appraisal 32%, Botany 17%, Climb 53%, Cthulhu Mythos 5%, Jump 53%, Land Navigation 64%, Listen 61%, Occult 26%, Spot Hidden 65%, Track 52%, Zoology 12%

Languages: Spanish 60%, English 30%, Chorti 60%

Attacks: Sword 40%, 1D6+2+dm damage (machete)

Spells: Contact Yig

Notes: Juan is a young man in his late 20s of obvious Spanish descent. He has rather elongated, lanky limbs and black hair and green eyes. Juan is of the same clan that lives in Castronegro, New Mexico, and is actually a contact of Filipo Diaz, owner of the occult shop named The Tomb (see "The Secret of Castronegro"). Juan has been contacted by Professor Beck to be a guide into the wilderness of Honduras with the promise of a percentage on any occult artifacts found.



Pacal, Chief of the Tribe of the Cayman

STR 16 **CON** 13 **SIZ** 11 **DEX** 12 **APP** 13
INT 14 **POW** 13 **EDU** 8 **SAN** 0 **HP** 12

Damage Modifier: +1D4

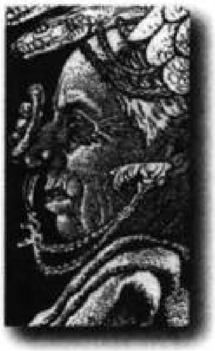
Skills: Climb 61%, Cthulhu Mythos 2%, Dodge 41%, Give Regal Commands 82%, Hide 62%, Jump 47%; Listen 68%, Natural History 44%, Navigate 58%, Occult 32%, Sneak 53%, Spot Hidden 67%, Throw 49%, Track 71%

Languages: Chorti 62%, Spanish 43%, English 24%

Attacks: Knife 51%, 1D4+2+dm damage (obsidian knife)
Spear 58%, 1D6+1+dm damage (spear, held)
Throw 49%, 1D6+1/2dm damage (spear, thrown)

Spells: None

Notes: Pacal is the chief of the Tribe of the Cayman. He has almond-colored eyes which mark his ancestral linkage to the Serpent Men. He conveys a regal stance about him and is extremely proud of his heritage. He holds it as a great honor to help Itzamná and the other Serpent Men.



Ahpo, Shaman of the Tribe of the Cayman

STR 12 **CON** 14 **SIZ** 10 **DEX** 15 **APP** 10
INT 17 **POW** 16 **EDU** 11 **SAN** 0 **HP** 12

Damage Modifier: +0

Skills: Astronomy 57%, Climb 48%, Cthulhu Mythos 3%, Dodge 35%, First Aid 53%, Hide 46%, Jump 33%, Listen 52%, Natural History 46%, Navigate 37%, Occult 67%, Sneak 41%, Spot Hidden 48%, Swim 38%, Throw 39%, Track 41%

Languages: Chorti 83%, Spanish 56%, English 31%

Attacks: Knife 58%, 1D4+2+dm damage (obsidian knife)
Spear 40%, 1D6+1+dm damage (spear, held)
Throw 39%, 1D6+1/2dm damage (spear, thrown)

Spells: Contact Degenerate Serpent Man Hybrid*

Notes: Ahpo is the shaman and spiritual leader of the Tribe of the Cayman. He is descended from a long line of shamans which have continuously served the tribe. Ahpo believes that the slumbering priest of the temple is an incarnation of both Itzamná and Gucumotz. He will offer whatever aid he can to bring back the glory of Itzamná and the temple. *New Spell

Sample Members of the Tribe of the Cayman

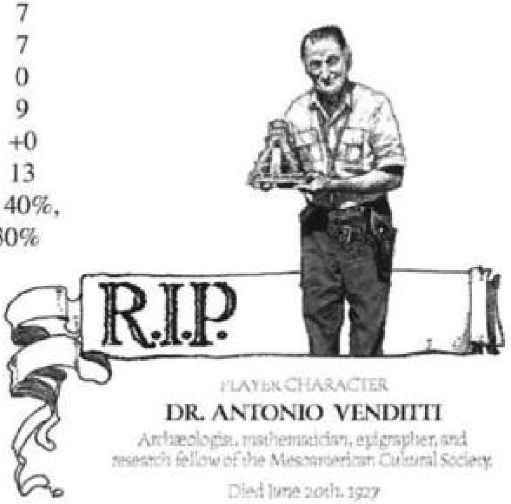
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
STR	11	14	7	9	8	10	14
DEX	11	7	15	11	9	15	15
INT	13	13	13	13	6	7	13
CON	14	13	15	17	10	17	11
APP	13	9	13	11	11	13	10
POW	7	13	11	11	12	13	5
SIZ	10	8	10	11	12	13	7
EDU	6	8	10	7	4	11	7
SAN	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hit Points	12	11	13	14	11	15	9
Damage Modifier	+0	+0	+0	+0	+0	+0	+0
Age	22	27	34	15	17	18	13

Skills Common to All: Climb 35%, Dodge 30%, Hide 25%, Jump 45%, Listen 40%, Navigate 30%, Sneak 25%, Spot Hidden 40%, Swim 35%, Throw 30%, Track 30%

Languages Common to All: Chorti 50%, Spanish 30%

Attacks: Knife 35%, 1D4+2+dm damage (obsidian knife)
Spear 30%, 1D6+1+dm damage (spear, held)
Throw 30%, 1D6+1/2dm damge (spear, thrown)

Notes: These are sample tribesmembers that will attend the ritual. Delegate a certain number of attendees dependent upon the situation and the Investigator's strength.



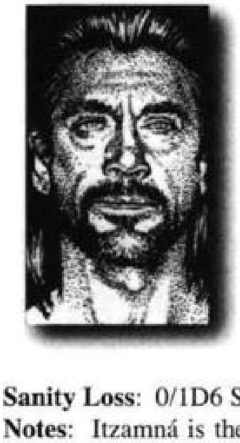
PLAYER CHARACTER

DR. ANTONIO VENDITTI

Archæologist, mathematician, epigrapher, and research fellow of the Mesoamerican Cultural Society.

Died June 20th, 1927

"Gentlemen! A most intriguing artifact freshly plucked from the tomb!"



Itzamná, Serpent Man sorcerer of Gol-goroth

STR 17 **CON** 17 **SIZ** 17 **DEX** 15 **APP** 15@
INT 23 **POW** 20 **Move** 8 **HP** 17

Damage Modifier: +1D6

Skills: Astronomy 77%, Climb 48%, Cthulhu Mythos 31%, Dodge 36%, Hide 42%, History 77%, Jump 42%, Listen 51%, Occult 62%, Sneak 44%, Spot Hidden 59%, Swim 47%

Attacks: Bite 40%, 1D8 damage+poison #
Sword 40%, 1D8+1+dm damage (macuahuitl)

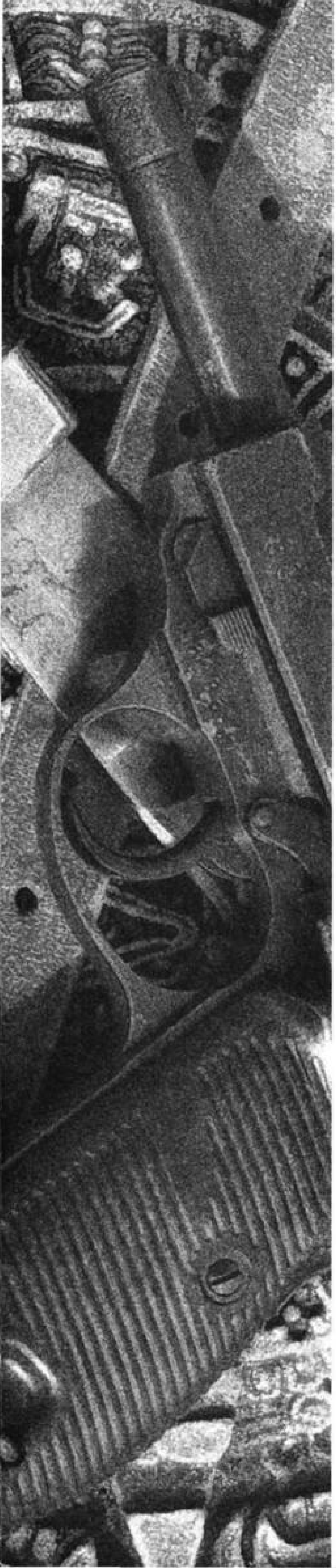
Armor: 1-point scales

Spells: Appear Human*, Cloud Memory, Consume Likeness, Contact Gol-goroth, Create Gate, Deflect Harm, Dominate, Dread Curse of Azathoth, Enthrall Victim, Hands of Colubra, Implant Fear, Shrivelling, Wrack

Sanity Loss: 0/1D6 Sanity points

Notes: Itzamná is the leader of the small enclave of Serpent Men that are in suspended animation within the temple. Itzamná is a formidable sorcerer and has led the locals to believe that he is both the Mayan gods Itzamná and Gucumotz.

@-in his current human form / #-POT equal to CON / *New Spell



Serpent Men, Life-Suspended Reptilians

	1	2	3	4
STR	8	9	13	17
CON	11	13	14	15
SIZ	11	13	8	9
DEX	12	14	15	8
INT	20	16	21	17
POW	13	11	12	10
HP	11	13	11	12

Move 8

Damage Modifier: +0 +0 +0 +1D4

Attacks: Bite 35%, 1D8 damage+poison; POT equal to 1/2 CON
Small Club 25%, 1D6+1+dm damage (improvised club)

Armor: 1-point scales

Spells: Each knows 2D6 appropriate spells

Skills: Astronomy 45%, Climb 45%, Cthulhu Mythos 15%, Dodge 30%, Hide 22%, Jump 33%, Listen 32%, Sneak 43%, Spot Hidden 46%

Sanity Loss: 0/1D6 Sanity points

Notes: The four Serpent Men are in a form of suspended animation. They will remain inanimate unless either the Investigators do something to arouse them such as make loud noises or physically bother them, or if Itzamná comes and awakens them. If awakened the Serpent Men will use every means in their power to eliminate the intruders.

Diminutive Serpent Men Hybrids

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
STR	7	14	7	10	7	8	9	11
CON	13	14	14	14	7	18	12	9
SIZ	6	6	3	7	11	8	8	8
DEX	12	15	15	15	13	12	11	11
INT	9	4	7	8	8	6	5	12
POW	10	14	9	5	4	8	12	11
APP	3	1	2	2	1	4	2	2
HP	10	10	9	11	9	13	10	9

Move 8

Damage Modifier: -1D4 +0 -1D6 +0 +0 -1D4 +0 +0

Attacks: All have the following attacks:
Bite 30%, 1D3 damage+poison (Potency is equal to half of Con)
Claws (2) 55%, 1D4+dm damage
Small Club 45%, 1D6+dm damage (stone club)
Knife 35%, 1D4+dm damage (stone knife)
Spear 40%, 1D6+1+dm damage (spear, held)
Throw 35%, 1D6+1/2dm damage (spear, thrown)
Throw 35%, 1D4+1/2dm damage (rock, thrown)

Spells: None

Skills: Climb 80%, Hide 85%, Sneak 80%, Speak Serpent Man 50%, Stone Writings 35%

Sanity Loss: It costs 0/1D6 Sanity points to see degenerate a Serpent Man.

Notes: The diminutive Serpent Men hybrids are a degenerate race resulting from the ancient Serpent Men being forced into the wilderness and having to mate with true serpents. They are usually smaller, less intelligent creatures who dwell in burrows and caves. They are often the source for many of the "little people" myths around the world.

New for *Call of Cthulhu*

- New Creatures -

Degenerate Serpent Men, Lesser Independent Race*

These degenerate creatures are the result of inter-breeding between full serpent people, true serpents, and humans in various locations around the globe during prehistoric times. Millennia of such unholy minglings have reduced most of the once-proud race of Serpent Men to the dwarfed hybrids: some nearly like small bestial Serpent People, others almost human but with ophidian characteristics. They speak in a harsh sibilant language and use crude weapons of stone, wood, and bone.

These creatures have given rise to the many myths regarding "Little People" around the world. This bestial race tends toward the more malevolent aboriginal myths, due to their limited intelligence. Sometimes an atavistic Serpent Person is present among the hybrids, in which case the degenerate forms follow and worship the untainted example of their race's former glory.

In combat, each round a degenerate Serpent Person can either bite once, claw twice, or use a weapon.

characteristics	rolls	average
STR	2d6+3	10-11
CON	3d6	10-11
SIZ	2d6	7
INT	3d4	7-8
POW	3d6	10-11
DEX	2d6+6	13
APP	1d4	2-3
Move		8
HP		8-9

Av. Damage Modifier: None

Typical Attacks: Bite 30%, 1D3 damage+poison (POT = 1/2 CON)
Claws (2) 45%, 1D4+dm damage
Small Club 45%, 1D6+dm damage (stone club)
Knife 35%, 1D4+dm damage (stone knife)
Spear 40%, 1D6+1+dm damage (spear, held)
Throw 35%, 1D6+1/2dm damage (spear, thrown)
Throw 35%, 1D4+1/2dm damage (rock, thrown)

PLAYER CHARACTER
ERNST OTTO REINHOLDE
Archaeologist, mythologist, artist, epigrapher, pathfinder, photographer, author and arms merchant.
Died Midsummer Night, 1927

"Pistoleros, fuego!"

Armor: None

Spells: None**

Skills: Climb 80%, Hide 85%, Serpent Man 50%, Sneak 80%, Stone Writings 35%

Sanity Loss: 0/1D6 Sanity points to see the degenerate Serpent Men.

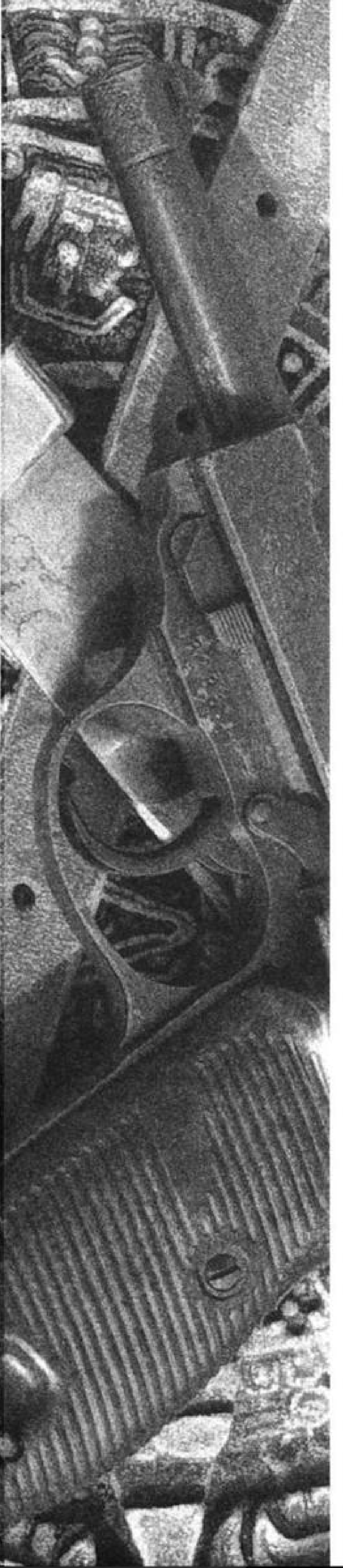
*The stats for the degenerate Serpent Men were originally printed in Chaosium's *Sacraments of Evil* in the scenario entitled "Plant Y Dacar" by Kevin Ross. They have also been reprinted in Chaosium's *Ye Booke of Monsters II* which was compiled by Scott Aniolowski.
** The degenerate Serpent People are originally listed as having a spell known as "The Curse of the Little People," but the author has removed that from this tribe.

- New Spells -

Appear Human

This spell originally appeared in Chaosium's *Sacraments of Evil* in the scenario entitled "Plant Y Dacar" by Kevin Ross. This is a common Serpent Folk magic, but may be known by other races as well. The spell allows anthromorphic creatures man-size or smaller to appear outwardly human. This magic works only on the caster himself and cannot be cast on others. The spell costs 5 Magic Points, and generates an APP of 3D6; each additional Magic Point added grants an additional 1D3 APP. Casting time is a number of rounds equal to the Magic Points put into the spell, and the illusion lasts for a number of hours equal to the caster's POW. Each casting also costs 1 point of Sanity.

Each caster has a unique human appearance, of the same sex as the caster where applicable; a given caster has the same human form each time the spell is cast. Any variations in the caster's APP (achieved through different levels of MP expenditure) are reflected by age and handsomeness: the higher the APP of a given form, the younger and more attractive that form is. A caster can thus appear to be the same person young and handsome one day, and aged and ugly



the next.

The spell has other drawbacks as well. Once the spell is cast, the keeper rolls a D100 and if the result is greater than the caster's remaining MPx5, there is some small tell-tale flaw in the illusion: a Mi-go may have a buzzing voice, a Serpent Person may speak with a lisp, a Deep One might exhibit signs of the Innsmouth look, etc. Also, if injured the caster must roll his current MPx5 or less, or the illusion falls and the caster's true form is revealed - and the witnesses must roll for Sanity loss. Finally, most creatures avoid generating too high an APP (20 or more) as such beauty is beyond earthly bounds; extremely high beauty may even cause Sanity loss at the Keeper's discretion.

Call/Dismiss Gol-goroth

To call Gol-goroth, the caster must be present at one of the Ixaxar (or Black Stone) on Midsummer's Night and perform the Ritual of Summoning. The ritual requires a large crowd of people grouped around the Black Stone. The leader stands before the group arrayed in goatskin with a wolf's head mask and intones the main chorus of the ritual. Usually the group will employ an old hag to beat a rhythm for the ritual on a black drum. (The beating drum will allow a +10% modifier to the chance of summoning.) Bound to the Black Stone nude are all sacrifices dedicated to Gol-goroth, at least one of them having to be a young virgin female. Also, next to the stone on the ground is a few month-old infant. Around the monolith are several bonfires, and before it is a brazier which billows out a vile, nauseous yellow smoke.

The ritual progresses with the old hag beating on the drum. The entire throng commences with a variety of wild dancing, chanting, flagellation, and orgy. The leader proceeds to lash the sacrifices with a bundle of branches until they are covered with an abundance of bleeding wounds. The leader then takes the infant and sacrifices it by bashing it against the Black Stone and then placing its dead body in the brazier. After a few minutes, the yellow smoke will suddenly thicken about the monolith and Gol-goroth will appear clinging to the top of the Black Stone. At this time, the sacrifices are offered as tribute to the God of the Black Stone. (Details of this ritual are fully laid out in "The Black Stone" by Robert E. Howard.)

Contact Degenerate Serpent Man Hybrid

This spell requires 3 magic points to cast. In order to work, the caster must be within 100 yards of the opening of the underground caverns in which the Serpent Men hybrids dwell, or the caster must be at the site of one of the Serpent Man hybrid's small altars that might be found within the forest.

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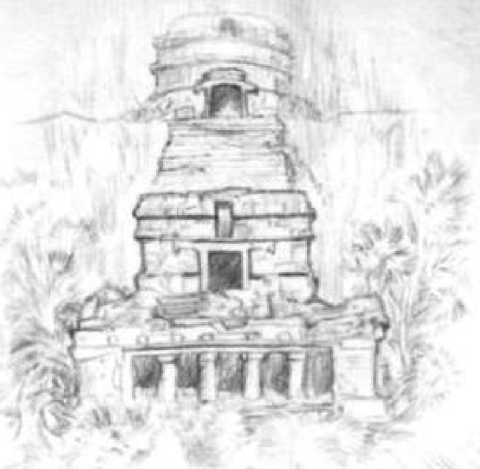
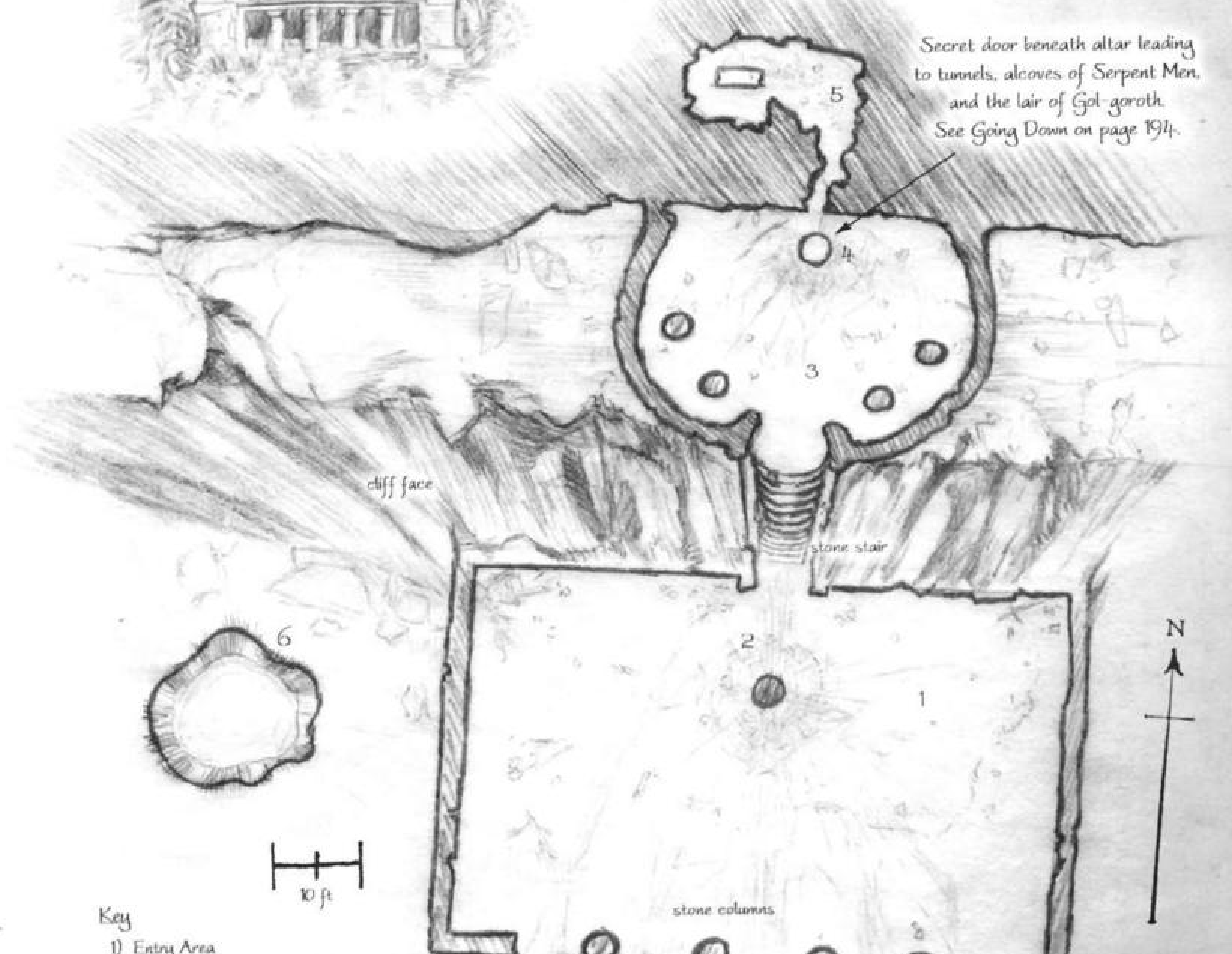
Temple of the Toad





Secret door beneath altar leading to tunnels, alcoves of Serpent Men, and the lair of Gol-goroth. See Going Down on page 194.

5
4
3
cliff face
stone stair
2
1
N
6
10 ft
stone columns

Key

1) Entry Area
2) Black Stone
3) Main Chamber
4) Altar
5) Mummy Burial Chamber
6) *Cenoté*

1927

■ New moon
● Full moon
▼ Solstice
▲ Equinox

January

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	■	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	●	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

February

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	■	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	●	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28					

March

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	■	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	●	19
20	▲	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

April

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					■	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	●
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

May

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
■	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	●	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	■	31				

June

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	●	16	17	18
19	20	21	▼	23	24	25
26	27	28	■	30		

July

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	●	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	■	29	30
31						

August

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	●
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	■
28	29	30	31			

September

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
●	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	▲
■	26	27	28	29	30	

October

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	●	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	■	26	27	28	29
30	31					

November

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	●	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	■	25	26
27	28	29	30			

December

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	●	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	▼	■	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

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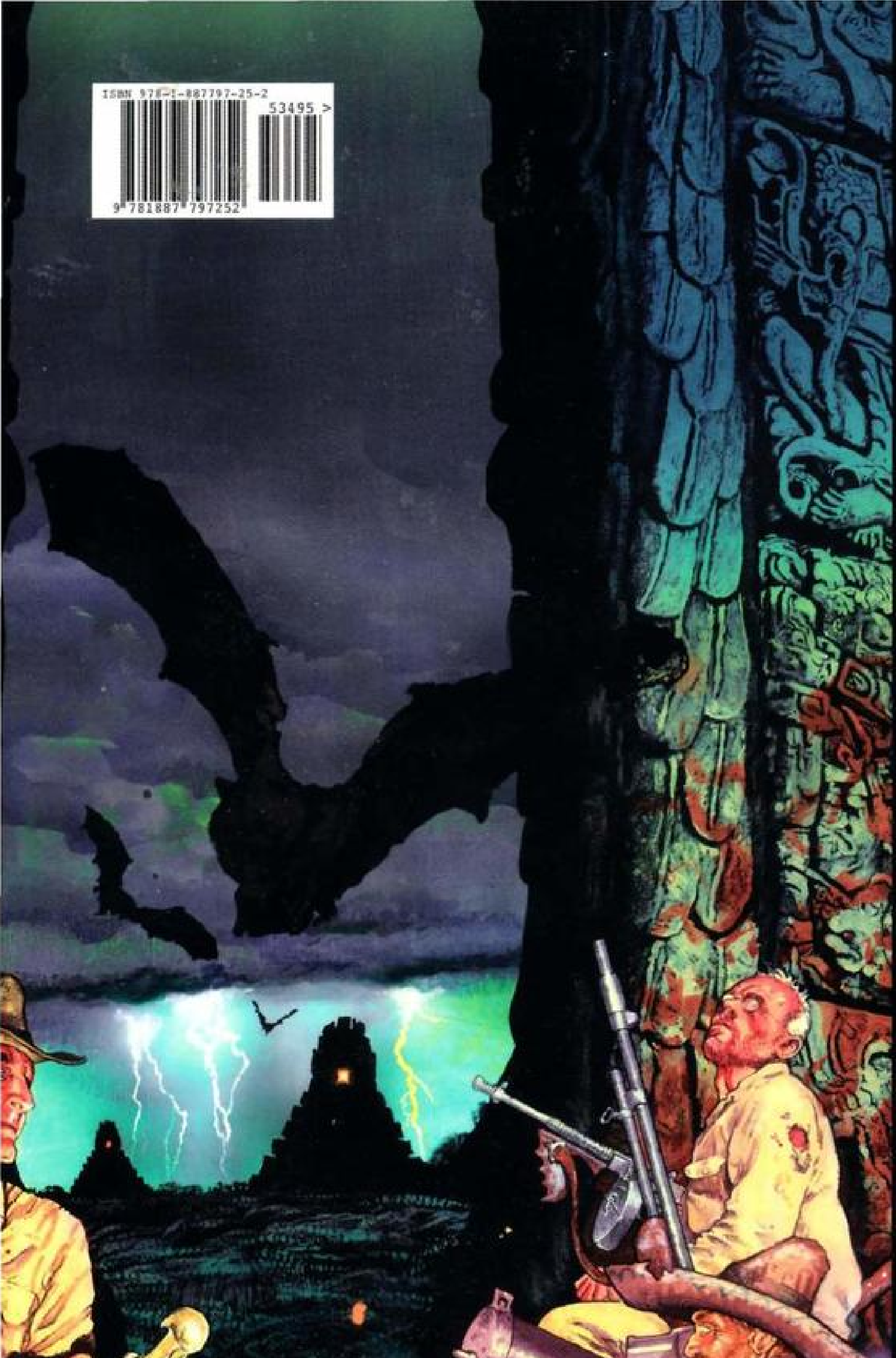

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